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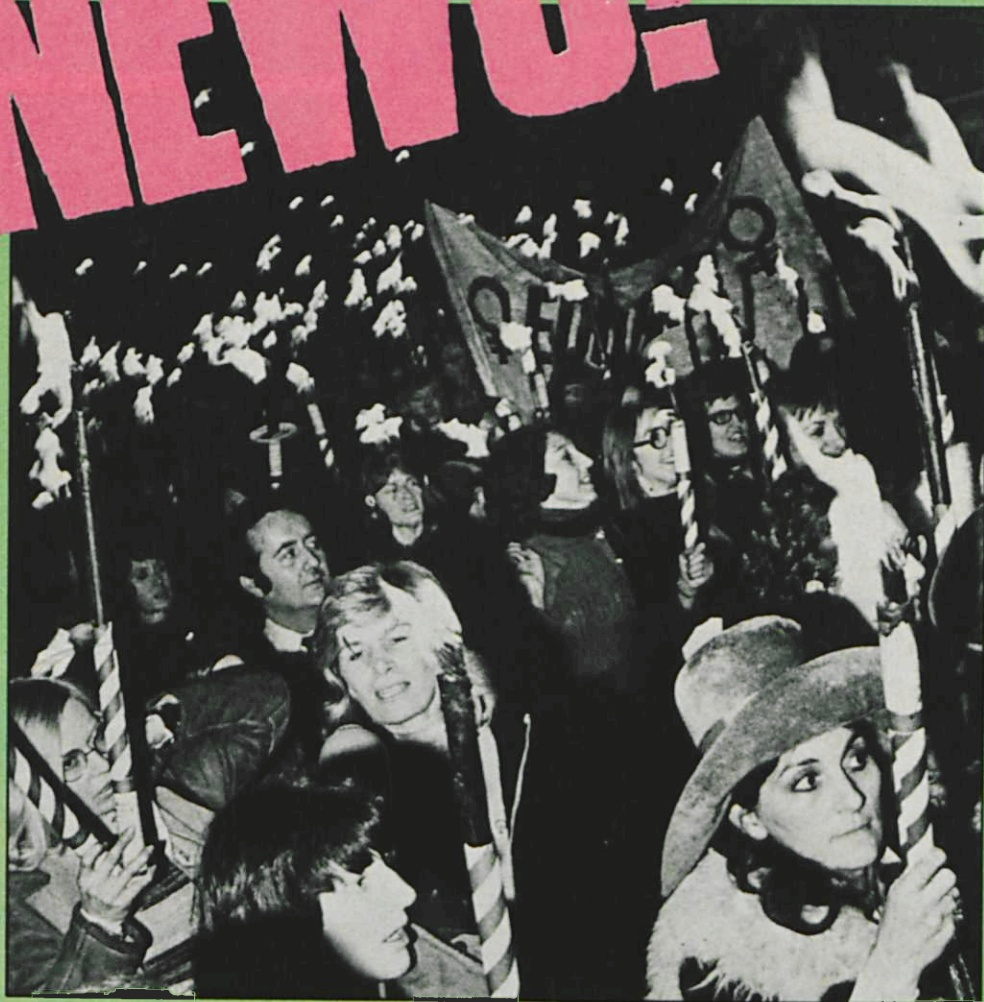
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NEWS!



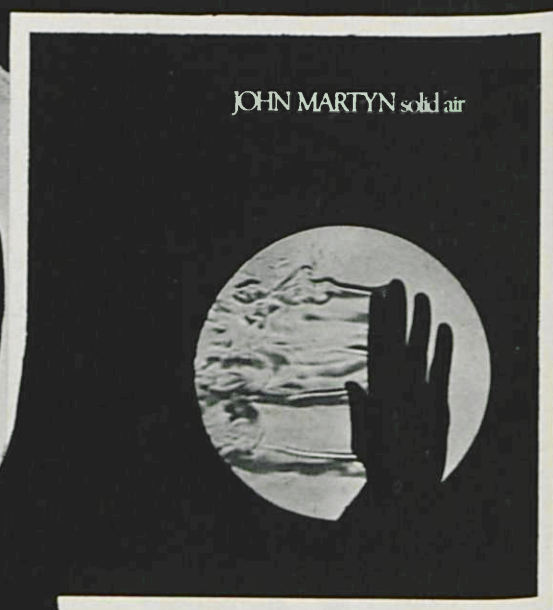
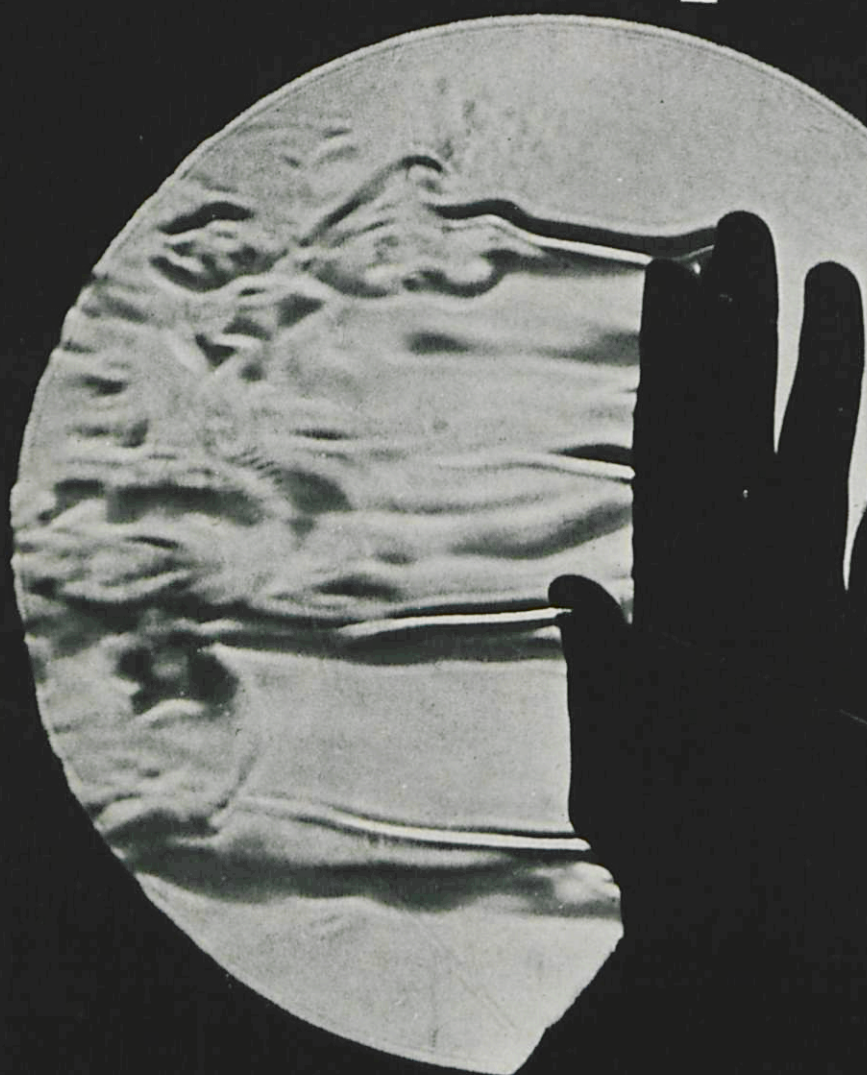
**THE ANTI DISCRIMINATION BILL
THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.**

**SO YOU THOUGHT THERE WAS NO FEMALE
LEONARDO-SEE THE OLD MISTRESSES.
TANYA-THE ONLY WOMAN WHO FOUGHT
WITH CHE GUEVARA.**

TO LOVE BOTH SEXES-WHY NOT?

DOCTORS-ARE THEY IN IT FOR POUNDS OR PEOPLE?

John Martyn



JOHN MARTYN solid air

Produced by John Martyn
& John Wood
ILPS 9226

Solid Air



Ward records ltd
basing street london w11

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Cover photograph by Angela Phillips

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TANIA: profile of a spy

Stacy Waddy



Che Guevara saw Bolivia as the strategic key in the struggle for liberation throughout Latin America, partly because of its terrain—both jungle and mountains where guerilla bands could fight and hide for many months; partly because it has borders with Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil, Peru and Chile, through which guerillas could infiltrate and spread the struggle. But above all Bolivia seemed ripe for revolution. Her earlier socialist revolution of 1952 has petered out in apathy and corruption long before the military coup that brought General Barrientos to power in 1964. After his mysterious death in a helicopter crash, the military Left and Right have swung in and out of power as if on a see-saw.

But the state of the people is scarcely altered by whoever is in power. 70% of the population is Indian, and 70% of them speak only Quechua and are illiterate. The current mortality rate is 1 in 3. The average income per head is barely £12 a year, and many peasants eke out a pitiful existence on the bleak high plains totally outside the monetary economy. The bitterly exploited tin miners are highly politicised and they have strong links with the student and campesino movements. It must have seemed the most open situation for revolution in Latin America.

At the time of his death, Che's campaign appeared to have been the fantasy of a sick man, his death a tragic disaster. But it was a stone thrown into the lake of Latin America that has caused ripples and now waves throughout the continent. Even the right-wing military regimes of Argentina & Bolivia itself, as well as the socialists of Chile and the leftist generals of Peru—all now represent a fierce, anti-U.S. imperialist nationalism. Che brought before people's eyes the extent of UK intervention and exploitation, and caused a wave of revulsion that has grown wider and stronger. The fight for freedom is on. Stacy Waddy was constantly taken for a second Tania: a fair-skinned foreign girl, visiting miners and peasant leaders, purporting to be a foreign journalist. In obscure hotels, people would whisper 'Tania had that room, too.' Total strangers would reproach her for not wearing the right spying gear; 'Tania wore boots' they would say meaningfully. She wrote about Bolivia for the Sunday Times and the Guardian, interviewed Regis Debray in the military prison in Camiri, and was finally expelled, after contact with Maoist guerillas in eastern Bolivia, as a Maoist spy. Astrologists can note she and Tania have the same birthday.

Tania was the *com de guerre* of the only woman who fought with Che Guevara's guerilla band in Bolivia. Since her death her name has been tossed to and fro, simultaneously blackened by some as a triple agent who, though she loved Che, betrayed him; and by others revered for her heroism. Her portrait, with the grave eyes and black beret, hangs in every Woman's Union office in Cuba.

There are two accounts of her life, utterly opposed. Was she a disciplined woman guerilla who died, in hand, struggling to set alight the flame of revolution in Latin America? Or was she, as the CIA allege, a triple spy (working for Moscow, East Germany and the Cubans), then hysterically to her death by sexually maddened comrades in the jungle?

The facts, briefly, are these:

Tania was born on 15th November 1933 in Argentina. Her name was Tamara Bunke, the daughter of German communists who had fled from Hitler in 1935. In 1952 her family decided to return to East Germany and Tania continued her education up to University. When Che Guevara, Cuba's Minister of Industries, came to a conference at Leipzig in 1960 she was his interpreter. The following year, after interpreting for the visiting Cuban National Ballet, she went with them when they returned to Cuba in May 1961. In Havana she worked at the Ministry of Education, until March 1963 she began her training as a revolutionary, to go out and fight for the liberation of other Third World peoples. It was not for a year that she was told, by Che, that she was to be sent to Bolivia. But first, she was to go to Europe, travelling around while she picked out a new alias: Laura Gutierrez Bauer.

So, as Laura Bauer she arrived in La Paz in October 1964. She gave German lessons, worked at a Ministry doing folklore research, and spent the next two years building up her contacts, even marrying a Bolivian student to secure her papers. In July 1966 she began to work in earnest, making contacts and receiving comrades who were to form the guerilla band. She arrived in the guerilla camp on New Year's Eve, and was sent on her first mission—to Argentina, which she had not seen since childhood. She returned to the camp with Regis Debray, the French political theorist and an Argentinian painter. This was against Che's orders, but she remained in the jungle and joined the struggle because by now her connection with the guerillas had been discovered. On 17th April, feverish and weak, she was assigned to the second column of guerillas, led by Joaquin, and for four months the groups were unable to re-establish contact. On 31st August 1967, betrayed by two young deserters and finally picked down through a peasant informer, Joaquin's column was trapped in a bush at Vado del Yeso, as they forded the Rio Grande. 35 soldiers had waited until, in the early evening, the guerilla band started to cross the river. When they were almost deep in the water, the shooting began, and only the men at the rear, Tania and Joaquin, could get back. It was a matter of moments, and they too fell into the current. Tania's body was swept away and found a week later. The whole column was eliminated. The column, now under attack by an overwhelming number of Bolivian soldiers and US advisers, was finally defeated and Che killed on October 8th 1967.

Tania has become a symbol of heroism and liberation for women throughout Latin America, for, notwithstanding Eva Peron, women are rare in Latin American politics.

The leader of the Bolivian struggle after Che's death, Inti Peredo (whose brother Coco died with Che, and whose youngest brother Chato is now the leader of the continuing National Army of Liberation) wrote an introduction to this life of Tania shortly before

his own death in action in La Paz:

'For us, Che is not dead; Tania, Joaquin, Chino and all the others are not dead. Physical death does not mean the death of ideas, and in the case of the Bolivian guerillas, commanded by Che, these ideas have spread throughout the world, becoming the battle-cry of young people everywhere.'

'Tania is an example for women all over the world, demonstrating the importance of their participation in the revolutionary struggle. In our continent, where there are still many feudal traditions regarding the position of women, she broke through these limitations to carry out a role which demands our admiration.'

'On writing this introduction to the book on Tania—which I haven't read'—(he was killed before he could)—'perhaps the best tribute I can give her is simply to say:

'She died heroically for the liberation of Latin America, but she will always live on as an example of the heights to which brave and revolutionary women can reach. Victory to death! Inti.'

The Training of a Spy

Major Ernesto "Che" Guevara, undertook responsibility for co-ordinating guerilla activity on a continental scale and for training guerilla fighters in preparation. Like Tamara, he was Argentinian. He had met her in 1960 in Berlin, and had got to know her, both at work and socially, after her arrival in Cuba. He decided that she could perform a very valuable role in helping to prepare the ground for armed struggle in Bolivia. Several months observation was required for her to be "cleared" before the decision could be made to inform her of the tasks she would be asked to undertake. Meanwhile, those first two years in Cuba, 1961–62, were the happiest years of her life.'

1964

'Under the new name of Tania she was to receive rigorous training in the art of clandestine work. In March 1964, after she had received a year's training, Tania was received by Major Ernesto "Che" Guevara in his offices at the Ministry of Industries. He explained the work she was to do. Up to that moment she was unaware of her specific role. Nobody had told her where she was going to be sent. Che got to the point quickly. He questioned her about her knowledge of the revolutionary tasks which awaited her and her willingness to undergo the privations and risks they entailed.

'Che explained the reasons for sending her to Bolivia, where she should try to make contact with the Armed Forces and the ruling bourgeoisie. She should travel throught the country, study the forms and extent of exploitation of the miners, farmers, and other workers in Bolivia; and try to make contact with their exploiters. Finally she was to wait for a contact from Havana to indicate the moment for definite action.'

There follows a detailed and gripping account of Tania's final tests as a spy—leaving messages, making contacts moving secretly—and the effectiveness of her new identity: Laura Gutierrez Bauer.

A Spy In Action

At last she was ready to go to Bolivia. Early in October 1964 Tania left to establish residence there as an Argentinian ethnologist called Laura Bauer.

1965

'By January 1965, Tania had already solved the problems connected with her stay in Bolivia. Her next step was to obtain a Bolivian passport.

'While in the process of introducing herself into Bolivian bourgeois circles, Tania devoted a few hours every day to teaching German to eight students—in order to have a visible source of income. The bulk of her time was spent on folklore and unpaid work on the Ministry of Education's Folklore Research Committee.

'Outstanding among the government figures Tania established herself with was the Chief of Information in the Government Palace, a friend of two Presidents, Barrientos and then Ovando. Through him, Tania obtained some documents which later gave Che, in the guise of a specialist on anthropological studies, a letter authorising him to travel all over Bolivia.

'Her connections in intellectual circles enabled her to meet many university students—some of them leftists, from whom she had to withdraw after giving them the impression that her ideology was of the moderate right.

'Among the non-Communist students Tania met there were two brothers, the sons of a mining engineer in Oruro. One of the brothers, who was studying engineering, asked her to marry him—but secretly, for his father might get displeased, thinking that he might neglect his studies.

'The proposal presented Tania with a possibility which in her precarious situation, she could not afford to ignore. It would afford her an opportunity to get the Bolivian documents she urgently needed, and would give real legality to her presence in the country. Such an eventuality had been considered before she left, and she had been given permission to take such an extreme step if it became necessary.'

Tania showed some tenderness for her husband, whom she called affectionately Mariucho, but she had made it clear that at any time she must be free to travel—ostensibly for her folklore research.

In La Paz, she continued her double life as a attractive bourgeoisie girl,

continued on page 32

The 4 faces of Tania



Tamara Burke
in Cuba

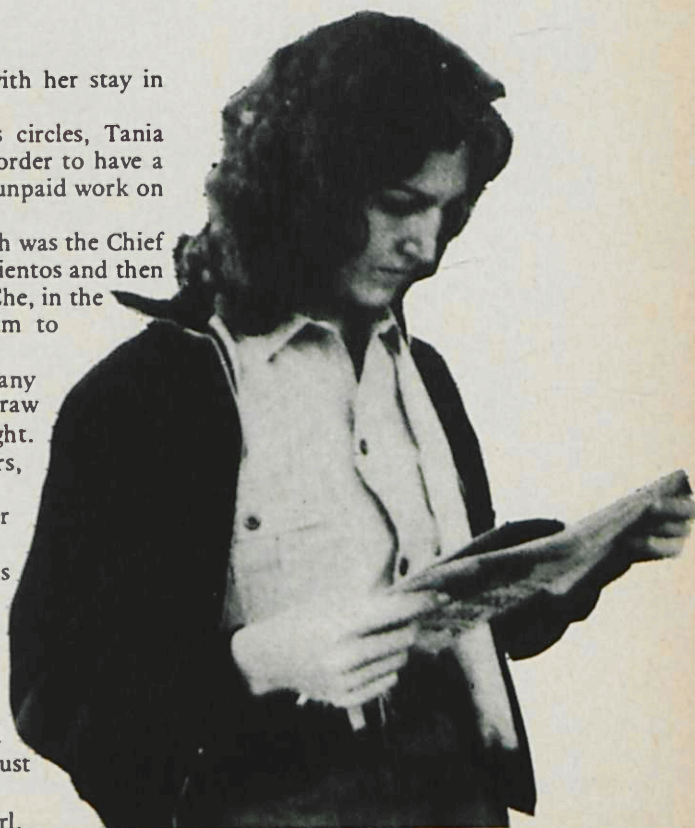


Haydée Bidel González
in Europe

Marta Iriarte
in Berlin



Laura Gutiérrez
Bauer
in Bolivia



In our own white

Dear Spare Rib,
Having regarded myself for some time as somewhat of a thwarted talent, I feel I must write to thank you for Lillian Roxon's article 'How to be a Published Writer'. (Spare Rib, Feb. '73.) I must have been living with my eyes shut for the past four years—it suddenly made me realize just how wide and exciting the possibilities are, for a would-be published writer like myself.

I have been writing poems and short stories for 3 or 4 years now, and sending them to publishers, all to no avail. The reply is always to the effect that they're sorry to reject it; they even LIKE it, but due to the shortage of space etc. etc. Maybe it's just me, but I get the feeling that this is no more than a diplomatic refusal in most cases.

Thank you Miss Roxon, for suggesting ways to force one's talent through such a barrier; in particular publishing one's own magazine—a tactic I shall certainly try, as I am also endowed with some degree of artistic flair.

Can it be that from simple, imaginative, lucid articles such as this, future marvels may be born? One can always try; and hope.

Thanks again.

Love,
Caroline J. Wynne.
65, Bowerdean Road,
HIGH WYCOMBE,
Bucks.

Making up men

Dear Spare Rib,
I like your magazine/newspaper, I support liberation and equality for everyone, and it's a pity you don't appear once a fortnight instead of once a month.

There are a couple of comments I'd like to make on the latest issue. Firstly, the preening of Michael Ramsden. Basically, the whole thing about putting make-up on is as unnatural for women as it is for men, isn't it?—or are you just trying to support the feelthy capitalist cosmetic industry? I mean, surely it's better to suggest cosmetic withdrawal methods for women, rather than support the expansion of the already vast and exploitative market to include men? Apparently, the primly named 'Near Nude Bronzing Gel' '... looks like natural healthy colour'. I suggest that in your classically glum/before, happy/after photos, Michael looks considerably more unnatural in the 'after'—in much the same way as do 'glamorous' deb's in their Harpers portraits. £13.05 worth of new man?!

I liked the 'School Daze Sexuality' piece. I

had similar experiences and imaginative fantasies during my boarding school days, which were ably stoked by the repressive attitudes of the teachers, not to mention the chaplain. Even now at 22, my parents still won't accept my attitudes towards the traditional 'methods' of boy/girl relationships.

You wish more men would talk so openly about themselves! Well, here I am. An ordinary middle-class desperate-to-be-totally-liberated anarchist in the street. I'll willingly talk openly about myself to anyone who I think is genuinely interested. Anything for a greater understanding of other people. I suspect that I suffer from more bourgeois syndromes than I care to think.

All the best,
Richard Denyer
33 Nottingham Place
London W1

Dearest Spare Rib,

(Ref. No.8)—I was impressed by your article 'Beauty and Beast' concerning the cruel exploitation of animals for the sole purpose of embellishing the female form—the female in question being woman—here you are preaching fire and brimstone to women who use cosmetics containing animal fixatives—but if one turns to pages 6 & 7 in your publication one is confronted with a volte face in this article 'Before & After' you openly encourage the use of cosmetics which I would think contain animal fixatives (although you do not state either way). Not only are you fucking the whole issue of animal protection—but you are encouraging men to use the same cosmetics which would—in time—increase the annual slaughter of whales from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand—if all men started taking your advice there would not be any animals left on this planet—except maybe the skunk—

—Girls please make up your minds—are you for or against animal exploitation—are you supporting this issue because it's trendy right now?

Yours faithfully
Antonio Ghura
237 Markhouse Road
Waltham-Forest
London E.17.

Dear Spare Rib,

Much as I loathe make-up on women, the idea of a man wearing it, although very Womens Lib, is just as repulsive to me. If we all ate the right foods, cleaned our skins properly, got sufficient fresh air and tanned our skins with sunlight in summer

and an ultra-violet lamp in winter, then no-one would need to plaster their skins with the revolutionary concoctions of de-composed animal fat described on pp 6-7 of issue no.8 of Spare Rib. Quite apart from the demoralization attached to make-up, hundreds of thousands of innocent animals are slaughtered every day so we can 'beautify' ourselves, and several million pounds spent every year. Surely we can look after ourselves better so we don't have to degrade ourselves by painting our faces to attract our men and women?

Susan Duggan-Jones
41 Station Road
London N3

Anti-discrimination

Dear Spare Rib,

It has just been brought to my notice (since unfortunately I have not yet received my up-to-date copy from my newsagent) that the latest edition of 'Spare Rib' gives a different address for the Campaign/Petition, to that which you gave your readers in July.

I have no doubt that you printed a change of address in good faith relying on the accuracy and reliability of your informants. Nonetheless, I do feel that as journalists you should check your background facts and sources, which briefly are as follows:

1. The Campaign and Petition are 'official' policy/strategy of the WL Movement.
2. They were adopted at the National Conference of March '72 and confirmed by a unanimous resolution of Conference in London in Nov. '72.
3. Following on from 1. and 2. the Campaign is not the 'baby' of any particular group but of the movement.
4. The job of national co-ordinator was given to me, not any group.
5. As National Co-ordinator part of my job is to co-ordinate strategy to organize and control publicity, to produce supportive material, to keep in contact with the hundreds of groups and individuals working for the Campaign. Consequently any change of address and names for the campaign are solely for the descretion of the National Movement, through decisions taken at National Conferences.

Yours sincerely

Pat Howe

WL Movement Anti-Discrimination Law Campaign
c/o 148 Bushey Mill Lane
Watford
Herts

Abortion

Dear Spare Rib,

Ref. to your article on abortion. Last November after two tests I found I was pregnant.

I was told this over the phone by my doctor (National Health) on Monday evening. On Tuesday morning I visited him and he made an appointment for me at the Good Samaritan Hospital, Marlebone Road, London, the following morning. After an examination I was told I was 12 weeks pregnant and would be admitted on Sunday. I had the abortion on Monday

morning without a general anaesthetic and left the same evening, which from the date of positive confirmation was seven days in all and without any upsetting incidents.

Yours sincerely,
Jill Chisholm
62 Chepstow Villas
London W2

Thanks for telling us about your experience—we wish more people were as fortunate.

Mistaken Identity

Dear Spare Rib,
My boyfriend thought you were a knitting magazine.

love
Judy Fender
University Hall
Buckland
Farringdon
Berks.

St Anne's Strike

Dear Spare Rib,
Your February account of the St. Anne's College strike demonstrated how well you and many others have been manipulated. Nowhere in the article was it made clear that St. Anne's is a women's college, dedicated to maintaining and, if possible, increasing the number of girls studying at Oxford. Nor did you state the fact that the majority of members of the college supported the authorities. The strike was not about women cleaners. The strike was led by a male-dominated union, ostensibly over the dismissal of a male employee, but in reality as an attack on the freedom of a woman's college and its ability to expand and economize. The result was a denial of justice.

It is apparent that the majority of unions are antipathetic to greater education and career opportunities for women because, they think, more jobs for women means fewer for men. The less skilled the job, the more the unionist is hostile to women, for there is, after all, no-one else to kick around. It is quite appalling that Spare Rib, of all magazines, should have been used by men and the media to disguise and distort an act of aggression by a union against women's interests.

Yours faithfully,
Ruth L. Deech
2 Turnpike Road,
Cumnor Hill,
Oxford.

Exploitative ads.

Dear Spare Rib,
Re your article 'Put a Her in your Hertz'. I should like to tell you that the laugh is on Hertz.

The mistake is made by both you and the ad-men that the car hiring is done by the male himself—his secretary or wife does this little chore for him, and this particular secretary-come-wife will certainly see to it that no other dolly-bird will sew her husband's buttons on.

Hertz is out on all counts, as are many other companies who are stupid enough to spend money on such misguided ads.

Women make more decisions than the ad-men dream of.

Some time ago Austin advertised a car that

'even the wife could drive'—that was the make I decided we would not buy, such patronage I can do without.

Yours sincerely
M Townsend
Kenton
Middlesex

Dear Spare Rib,

I read your article about the exploitative type of advertising illustrated by Hertz adverts with great interest, and shortly afterwards I saw the enclosed advert from the February edition of 'Over 21'

He's Never Seen My Legs!

I was wearing my new maxi when I met my boyfriend. But I can't keep on wearing it so he's bound to see the dark hairs on my legs. Next time you go out give him a surprise... wear your mini. Men like to see the goods now and again! But you must get rid of those whiskers right away. It's so easy with 'Immac' Hair Remover. Spread it on, leave four/five minutes and then rinse off. Immac simply dissolves away the hairs—leaves the skin gorgeously smooth.

It seems incredible that people are prepared to accept this derogatory trash, and I really hope that you can lead some kind of campaign against it.

yours sincerely,
Barbara Kesselaan
24a Palewell Park
East Sheen
London SW14

Dear Spare Rib,

Isn't the solution to the ads you describe in Spare Rib No 8 to have a boycott of any firm using such ads? This would seem to be the only argument they are interested in—

yours sincerely,
Ben Whitaker
13 Elsworth Rod
London NW3

Well, we hope you'll start doing that.

Ladies first

Dear Spare Rib,

I feel I should draw your attention to an article that appeared in 'Justice of the Peace', January 20th 1973, entitled 'Ladies First'. To quote: 'We have been mercifully spared in recent months the obtrusive activities of "Women's Lib", except for a discussion (if it can be given the dignity of that title) on television in December. Though chaired by Robin Day, the solitary male who dared open his mouth narrowly avoided being torn limb from limb. So far as we could make out the free-for-all was supposed to be a debate on "unequal opportunity for women", the prevailing view being that they are "forced" into marriage, pregnancy, child birth, care of homes and families "without remuneration"'. While some of these ladies admitted that a small proportion of women find their way into business or professional life, they asserted that male prejudice blocks their way to promotion and keeps them in the typing pool, this writer (believe it or not, my italics) regards himself as a feminist!

best wishes
Maureen Davies

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ACROSS THE GREAT DIVIDE

Its 11p.m., the room is full of smoke, one woman glances at her watch and regretfully unfolds herself from the floor to catch the last bus. Gradually in twos and threes the rest of the women drift, still talking, towards the door. This is the end of a regular consciousness-raising session in one of the London groups. Most of the women will see each other even before the next meeting, either socially or at another meeting and yet there always seems to be too much to talk about.

Tonight has been a good session, discussion was intense and many hidden tensions and dissatisfactions have come to the surface and been discussed. Most of the dozen women are leaving with a sense of satisfaction that something has been achieved. This is not always so. Some evenings degenerate into banal 'chat' sessions and people leave with a sense of guilt about the time wasted. This particular group has been together for about 18 months. One woman left the group early on, another left the country and yet another moved to another city, otherwise this group has kept intact in spite of problems which are bound to arise within a group of women who came together originally with nothing more in common than their desire to change the status of women.

What do they talk about? What do they hope to achieve? Everything is discussed as long as it is related to personal experience. By discussing personal hopes and fears, experiences and problems, women are beginning to learn about themselves. Through shared experiences they are beginning to find the confidence to map out a different kind of life. It's not easy to eradicate years of conditioning in a few months and it could be a lonely and depressing business trying to do it alone. At first common experiences of discrimination are easy to discuss, they are outside and simple to identify, but this is just a preview of the real problem which is identifying and discussing conditioning that has been totally absorbed into their own lives. And women aren't the only ones to have suffered from sex-role conditioning—it can be as bad for a man. In New York several male consciousness-raising groups have begun. ELLEN LEOPOLD looks at these groups and talks to some of the men who've been involved in them.

Men in groups is no novelty. In one guise or another they've been making decisions about what women can and cannot do for centuries. Most of these decisions fall into the realm of *cannot*. Women *cannot* determine the nature of the government that rules them or participate in its policy-making. Women

cannot be sexually available to any man other than their husbands but they *can* and must make their sexual status publicly known ('Miss' for the still virginal and unpossessed, 'Mrs.' for the sexually claimed and confined). And of course, women *cannot* belong to men's organizations. So they obviously have had very little influence in determining their character and cannot be held responsible for their actions.

What do all male groups have in common? Armies, government cabinets, football teams, secret societies, all may be characterized first, by the hierarchy of their memberships (vice presidents, co-captains, under-secretaries, etc.) and secondly by their competition with other male groups for some form of supremacy and control (as symbolized by the World Cup, the Prime Minister, oil rights in the Middle East or Alaska or the North Sea). Wrestling control invariably involves the use of some form of aggression or violence which can be expressed in many different ways, from close-range (in combat or in sports events) to remote control (the air war in Vietnam).

All possible variations, however, share a common interest—the need to create and maintain divisions between separate male groups. This suggests that male groups have an extroverted consciousness, that is, they direct their attention—and their hostility—away from themselves towards other 'foreign' groups. So it is in their interest to build up, exaggerate and deride the distinctions between them (hence the concept of the 'pure' race, the Yellow Peril, wogs, chinks, gooks, etc.). A tragic waste of energy and life—which we call *History*.

One significant aspect of women's consciousness-raising groups is that they share absolutely none of these characteristics. True, they are exclusively female but they are not subject to "traditional" (read "male-derived") forms of dominance and hierarchy. They have an introverted rather than an extroverted consciousness, i.e., they direct their attention to themselves, to what they have to learn from each other about each other. Learning about their oppression means not simply building up their hostility and anger towards men. It also means confronting their own fear and distrust of each other as women since, after all, they have been taught only how to hate and compete with one another—for men.

The energy coming out of these groups is based on the growing self-confidence of its members and their hope to extend that strength to other women outside the groups. It is *not* a gesture to withdraw into defensively isolated units but one that aims ultimately to expand into large-scale cooperative action that will override the paralyzing divisions that men have established (the nuclear family, class society, imperialism etc. ad nauseam). So the struggles of each individual discussion group may give some indication on a microscopic scale, of what women may one day be able to accomplish on a much larger scale.

All of this is, of course, quite threatening to men because it cuts directly across the grain of male ideology and has already

begun to show remarkable signs of success. Many men, stripped of the old assumptions that defined and protected their own masculinity, now feel naked, deprived and often impotent ("Mention women's lib in bed and I lose my erection"). It has become increasingly harder for them to escape confrontation with women who embody this threat (the Foreign Legion has, alas, lost its charm). Putting up resistance through arrogance and derision leads them quickly to an emotional dead end. To women, the more obvious alternative is for men to join in the process. Recently, a few men have made tentative gestures in this direction by forming their own consciousness-raising groups, patterned on those that women have set up.

This may be the first instance in which men have actually taken the lead from women on the structure of a political organization. This is remarkable in itself. More remarkable perhaps, is the attempt that men in these groups may make to get in touch with their own emotions, a form of behavior they have always devalued in women and so have scorned as intolerable weakness in men. To do this they will have to overcome many serious obstacles that women did not have to tackle. Women, socially weak and powerless, did not have to fear the loss or transfer of power and control that men have always taken to be the result of shared intimacy (Samson and Delilah syndrome). Also, women, often thrown together by default, have at least known how to talk to one another about issues that bound them together as women—childbirth, motherhood and menstruation. Men, lacking this introverted consciousness, have so far been denied this outlet. Their personal contact with each other beyond the realm of neutral or abstract discussion has been largely restricted to the exchange of defensive lies and myths related to sexual conquests (and of course, dirty jokes—what woman do you know who can tell one well?)

Sexuality poses even greater threats. The sexual tension among men has always been potentially much more explosive than among women. Society has allowed and even encouraged women to be physically demonstrative with one another as with men because it is a visible expression of their role as supporters and nurturers of the status quo. The possibility of female homosexuality has rarely, in fact, ever been acknowledged by the powers that be. Prohibitive legislation concerns only male homosexuals because of the presumably exclusive relationship between male heterosexuality, power and strength. For this reason, any discussion of sexuality among men involves the added risk of crossing socially powerful taboos which do not apply so vehemently to women.

How have men begun to cope with these problems within their rap groups? Reports vary. Enough men's groups have now emerged in New York City to make it almost as difficult and as dangerous to generalize about them as it is to generalize about women's groups. There is also—for a woman—the added problem of distrusting a man's interpretation of his own experience though obviously this is a prob-

lem that mens' groups, if successful, should help to alleviate. Still, feedback from many different men suggests that these groups do share some common elements.

First, the majority of men in any one of them came to it in response to some kind of direct exposure to a woman involved in Womens' Liberation. Some men felt pressured to join, others did so voluntarily. Secondly, all groups began by concentrating their attention on their relations with women, rather than with men. Many men (heterosexual) discovered that they did not in fact really like women as human beings but still needed them for sex.

This revelation is still something that comes as a great surprise to many women—and men. One man, a forty-five year old screen-writer who had been a vociferous proponent of Womens' Liberation for many years, admitted that he 'supported the movement wholeheartedly, because if women got together to work out their own problems by themselves they'd be out of my way and out of my hair'. A lot of men claimed to feel victimized by women they knew and began to explore the anger they harboured against their mothers. Fears of being devoured, possessed, weakened or contaminated by contact with women suddenly poured out of a lot of men (fears one might collect under the heading 'Things My Mother Never Told Me'). One middle-aged architect confessed that he was still incapable of telling his mother about the woman he had been living with for twelve years! A second man in the same group called this man's mother 'a shrivelled old cunt' and then said about himself that he was afraid to get divorced while his own mother was still alive for fear that 'that great yawning vagina would suck me up again'. Not surprisingly, this man does not talk much about the woman he lives with except to say that he encourages her to masturbate. (In this context it should be noted that our society has always respected misogyny but that men have never given us any equally respectable word for man-hating.)

Another area of agreement among men I spoke with was the lack of explicit discussion about sex with . Some men could speak in the group about times when they were impotent and about their fear of performing incompetently but none wanted to describe in detail the ways they enjoyed or didn't enjoy the act of intercourse itself. This stands in direct contrast to most womens' groups where, with a passion for gruelling detail, many women vie for the title Most Sexually Abused or alternately Most Sexually Gratified. Orgasms or the lack of them are often explicitly counted. Not so with the men. Similarly, many men have so far been squeamish about detailing their masturbatory fantasies though not about tackling the subject itself. All said that it was a relief to be able to talk about it openly, especially for those who still felt guilty about it. One man actually described the experience of masturbating without the support of any fantasy, to his group's mixed amazement and disbelief—'I had been reading some of the statements of the radical feminists and lesbian women

about how men don't really know how to make love with a woman because they basically don't love themselves. And then I began to understand how much I had been alienated from my own body and feelings. I decided that I wanted to masturbate without fantasizing about it, objectifying it in any way or thinking of it as a clandestine act. So I simply laid back and let myself go—moving my body and hands freely. It was wonderful. After that night I realized how much pleasure I was capable of giving myself and I wanted to share my experience with other men in the group. They were incredulous.'

Some sources of fantasy are more easily tapped because they are shared by many men unlike the intensely private masturbation scenarios. These involve the Playboy fantasies of the Super Man, the super-sexed macho stud for whom any woman would more than willingly die. All American males have been subjected to this myth in one form or another. All the American males in these groups are more than anxious to get rid of it. On the darker side of this myth, many men revealed pre-adolescent fantasies of torture, sadistic images of sticking branding irons into girls' vaginas or cutting off their breasts. But if men had this power over women then there was the companion fear that women might possibly exercise this same power over men. Hence the equally painful fantasies of the insatiable and dangerous passion princess who couldn't feel a penis inside her that was shorter than ten inches and who castrated or killed her partner when sexually unsatisfied.

One man had assumed until he was twenty that a girl was incapable of having sexual intercourse until she had menstruated because of a particularly venomous slogan that circulated through his high school—'Old enough to bleed, old enough to butcher'. He was relieved to get this off his chest and to find that so many other men had also been deceived and terrified by similar, if less odious, fallacies.

It seems that discussions like these that concentrate on women as 'others' help to establish a minimum level of solidarity and trust, although some casualties occurred in the groups even at this stage. (Unbelievably enough, a member of one group seriously threatened to quit unless half of the meeting time was devoted to playing poker.) Once a basic feeling of comfort has been established many of these groups begin to make tentative gestures towards finding out how they feel about each other as men. For all of them, this is entering perilous waters but every man I talked to whose group had travelled this far found it infinitely more exciting than the relative calm of earlier meetings.

They were elated to find that they were allowed to get angry with other men, to admit openly to feelings of competition, resentment and even dislike, without the fear of reprisal. This does not necessarily mean of course that they have wiped out those feelings by stating them but they do see it as a critical first step. Men have traditionally found it much easier to vent anger on 'their' women, however inappropriately, because it was the safest outlet, the one that involved the least risks, and the one that society sanctioned.

Woman as helpmeet is simply a polite gloss on woman as punching bag.

Redirecting that anger, men have found that they can make each other just as unhappy as they have made women though men are vulnerable to different threats. No man has as yet been able to cry in one of these groups but a few did admit that they would like to be able to. Sore spots for these men included distinctions in the status and salaries of their jobs and the potential of each to grant upward social mobility (remember, this is America!). This of course carries into discussions about success and ambition models that have been imposed on them and their ability or willingness to renounce them. Fathers, as the original Mr. Big Threat, make an obvious appearance in this context—'My father always told me to Go out there and make a million bucks but he would've hated me if I earned more money than he did. I always knew that and he always knew that but he didn't know that I knew. I've got \$2.73 in my pocket'.

Understandably, much of mens' identities have been wrapped up in their professional achievements and so many men in these groups still believe that their attractiveness to women relates primarily to their success or failure in public life. And, unfortunately, many women are still vulnerable to the appeal of power by association with power—a lot of women still think Aristotle Onassis is the world's sexiest man with Pierre Trudeau running a close second.

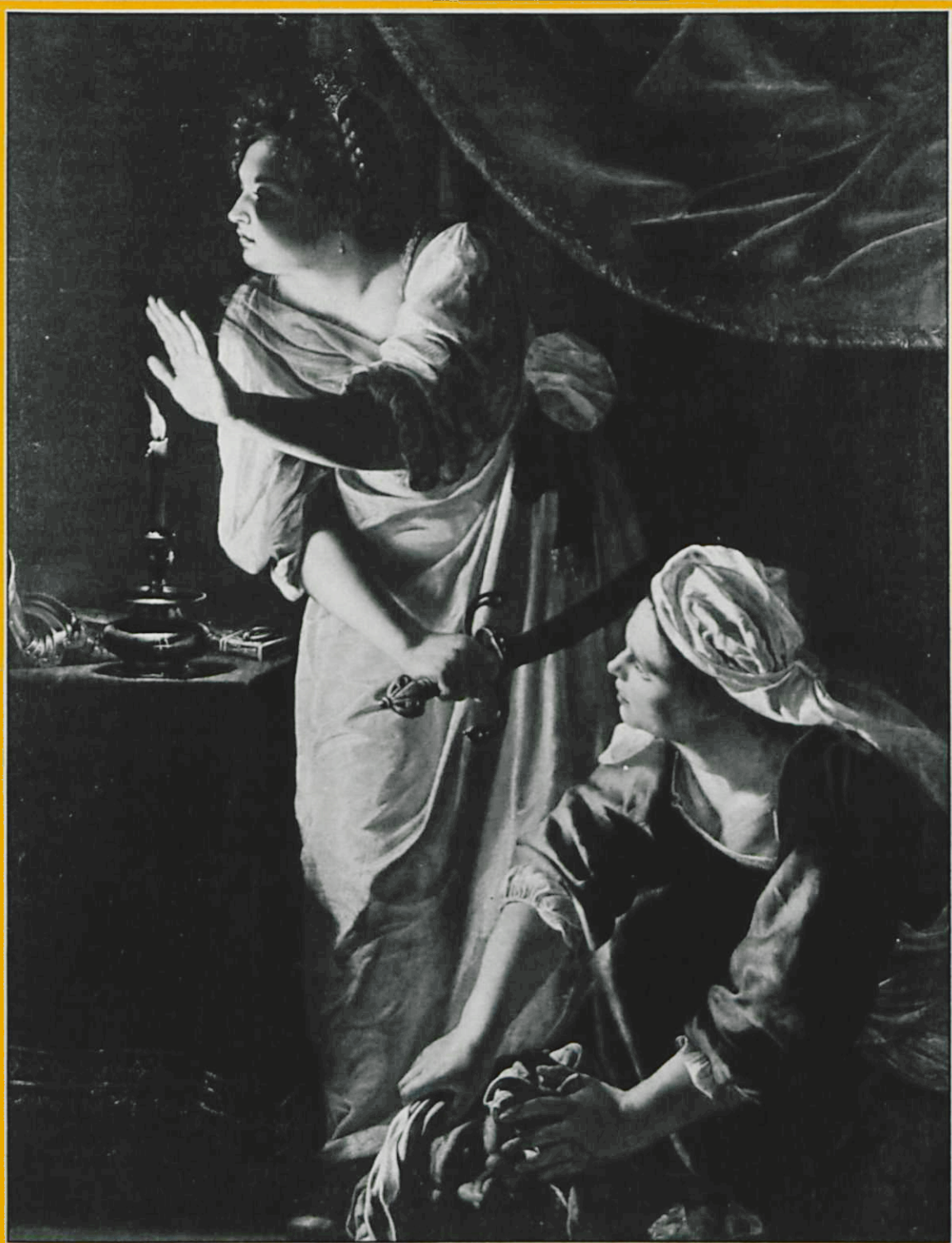
How many men feel this way about Mrs. Gandhi? Other fights in the groups were triggered by accusations of treating women as sex objects, of indulging oneself as a sex object, or avoiding an emotional response by fancy verbal footwork and of indulging in emotional Romantic fantasies (referred to as the Grunt and Groan School of analysis).

They have also tried to examine the specific tactics they used to intimidate and keep each other at a distance. The most obvious is the ability to simply out-shout another person, if only to maintain a wall of solid noise between them (women are usually not very good at this). Then there is the classic intellectual intimidation method (more successfully used on women). More subtle is the game of dividing up into smaller alliances within the large group to create the protective illusion that one has friends backing one up just in case. Some men avoid the problem of confrontation altogether by acknowledging in private that they would rather talk to women anyway.

But if men find it hard to get angry at other men they find it even harder to get close to them. They have lived so long in an emotionally stagnant zone between the two extremes, incapable of moving in either direction. Some now want to change this but are finding it difficult. As one man recently asked, "Why is it so much harder for me to be gentle or open with another man than to be witty, or garrulous, or cool and foreboding?"

At least part of the answer lay in the terror of that old demon homosexuality. A lot of men said that they now felt much less sexual tension in the company of

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Old Mistresses

by Rosie Parker

Have you ever been involved in one of those familiar arguments on the equality of the sexes when someone says with smug finality, 'Ah, but there were never any great women artists.' Now you can tell him about the old mistresses—the female contemporaries of the Renaissance old masters.

Despite the fact women were denied entry into the guilds during the sixteenth century, making it impossible for them to train as professional artists, some women did succeed in becoming highly successful painters.

They were all the daughters of artists. Their old master dads submitted them to the same rigorous training they would have given to their sons.

The old mistresses were known and collected throughout Europe, and recorded by the contemporary art historian Vasari. Their talent was never belittled because of their sex.

Their works have survived but today even art history students are unaware that women painted professionally during the sixteenth century. Why this ignorance? It may be because modern Art History is grounded in the late nineteenth century when, perhaps as a reaction to the feminist movement, male writers began to deny the equality of women's talent and to disregard them as serious professional artists.

These pictures were included in the exhibition of old mistresses held in Baltimore last year.

previous page

Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1651)

'Judith and Maidservant with Head of Holofernes'

Artemisia Gentileschi painted numerous huge canvases illustrating the story of Judith decapitating Holofernes. Perhaps her obsession with the gory tale was the result of an appalling incident during her youth. Her father brought a rape suit against a teacher he had hired for her and the authorities tortured her to determine the truth of the charge. She was also an excellent portrait painter; Charles 1st commissioned her to paint the entire royal family.

© Detroit Institute of Arts



Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614)

'Lady with a Lapdog'

Lavinia Fontana, an Italian who lived in Bologna, had the Pope as her patron. He even commissioned a self portrait from her. She was a popular portrait painter and was said to have earned more for her work than even Van Dyck.

© Walters Art Gallery

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)

'The Sadness of Telemachus'

Angelica Kauffman was one of the founders of the Royal Academy in England. She supported both her husband and her father with her painting. A gifted musician, she painted an allegory of herself besitating between the arts of music and painting. Today she is remembered for her decorative work but her paintings are largely ignored.

© Metropolitan Museum of Art N.Y.



Marie-Louise Vigee-Lebrun (1755-1842)

'Portrait of The Artist's Daughter'

Society was comparatively sympathetic towards women painters in France during the eighteenth century. As a result Marie-Louise Vigee-Lebrun was one of a number of first rate women artists. She was elected to the Academy in 1783 and became painter to Queen Marie Antoinette. Things began to go downhill for women artists shortly afterwards and with the French Revolution of 1789 women were banned from the Academy.

© Museum of Fine Arts Boston

Sfonisba Anguisola (1528-1625)

'Portrait of a boy'

Sfonisba Anguisola was an infant prodigy who painted a portrait at the age of twelve which was sent to be exhibited in London. By the time she was twenty four she was famous all over Europe and worked for King Philip II of Spain. When she married he gave her a dress covered with pearls.

© Walters Art Gallery

With thanks to the 'Feminist Art Journal', 41 Montgomery Place, Brooklyn NY, USA 11215, Subscription 5 dollars a year overseas



Recently a painting attributed to David was discovered to be by Marie-Louise Charpentier. Who knows, perhaps other old mistresses lie beneath old masters.



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When I was a small girl I always dreamt that one day I would do something big in connection with people and when I die all the people of Egypt will walk after my funeral.

My mother and father were both from the petty-bourgeoisie—not rich but with some money. When they married they lived with his parents until my grandfather died and my grandmother threw them out and told them to support their children themselves; my mother sold most of our things to get some money to live on and to build a home. My father never worked before this he was always dependent on his parents. He had no skills, all he could do was read and write, so he sold things to get money to spend but not to support his family. There are seven children in my family, four girls and three boys. I am the youngest. My mother managed to make a small home for us—two rooms and a kitchen and diningroom. My father still wouldn't work so my mother decided she had to do something to feed the children. She became a dressmaker. She had never made a dress before so she learnt how to sew and worked from our home. The tradition is that the eldest sister must stay at home to look after the children. If she marries then the next sister must stay at home. I am lucky because I am the youngest.

That means that if you hadn't been the youngest daughter you would not have been sitting here in London now?

No, I would be married with seven children like my sisters. Anyway I went to the primary school which is free and where most children go but hardly even learn to read and write. I passed the exams to the secondary school and left there when I was 15½ because I found the lessons very easy. I wanted to go to university to be a lawyer or a journalist but I didn't have good enough marks for the faculty of literature so I applied to the faculty of law.

Did you live in Cairo?

No I lived far from Cairo in a little village about 2½ hours by car. So I had a big problem to go to Cairo to the university. My mother had no money for the things I needed like books, clothes and rent. There are also some fees at the university when you start, even though its free later. Everyone thought I should forget about the university and go to the big town nearby to become a teacher in one or two years. This town is very near and I could go by train every day and still live with my mother. But I was determined to be a lawyer or a journalist. First I decided that the problem was not so big. I didn't need any new clothes; two shirts, two skirts and a pullover is enough for me, I don't want to be a star. I could live with my brother in Cairo so there was no rent problem. So, the only money I needed was the fees of £15. Egyptian pounds.

Can you give us some idea of the value of £15 Egyptian pounds?

One Egyptian pound is like 50 pence in England. And 15 Egyptian pounds is a lot



Atiat is a student at the national film school in London. She is 33 and has been married for seven years. Her husband stayed behind in Egypt when she came here to study filmmaking and to make films to use in Egypt as means of communication to the illiterate mass of Egyptians and to further the revolutionary struggle. Here, Atiat talks to Sue Allan about her life and the position of women in Egypt.

of money because my whole family of nine people, without even paying rent could live on that much for one month. We have a very nice way to collect money among the poor families. Every month every family pays one pound into a fund and then one family takes all those pounds, so we did this for me to go to university. We collected 20 Egyptian pounds for me. And I went to Cairo, the first person in my entire family, uncles, cousins, everyone, to go to university. I was nearly sixteen when I went. I was the youngest girl in the university. In Egypt the women have always been accepted for education, but only from the upper classes and the bourgeoisie it's only rare for poor people like me.

The first year I failed my examinations because I didn't have enough money to buy the books to study, they were very expensive, 2 or 3 pounds per book. I decided I'd have to work to get money to buy the books. So I got a job in the railway station in Cairo, printing on the machines, making holes in the tickets. For three years I was in this job; I received eight Egyptian pounds per month. I went to the university when I was not required to work and studied a lot at home. At this time I decided I could not live with my brother and his wife any more, she was very hard with me, so I asked my mother to move to Cairo with my unmarried sister and younger brother so that we could live together. So they all moved to Cairo, my father came too. He had been working in a clothing store for the past few years so he got a job like that and my mother did dressmaking. My father as usual didn't stay long and soon I was the biggest breadwinner in the family. He went off and we only saw him when he came at feast times or festivals, usually with something for us and giving my mother two or three pounds which he always took back before he left. I gave all the eight

pounds I earned to my mother and kept only 5 pence or 2 pence for transport to and from the job at the railway, but when I had overtime I could get to the university or buy a book.

What are all your other brothers and sisters doing?

My oldest brother is a shop assistant like my father and my next brother works in a cafe selling coffee and tea, it's a very bad job. My youngest brother went to the primary school but he didn't complete his education. He went on to the military school for three years and then joined the army. He is very honest and has great ambition but he couldn't realise it because he had no money to let him go to the university. My family wanted him to get a certificate very quickly so that he could work to get some money.

All my sisters look after the house and children—none of them work outside the home. All my brothers and sisters have five or six children, that is the common thing.

After three years in the railway job I looked for something where I could earn more money. I went to the puppet theatre and learned how to operate the puppets for two weeks before applying for a job. I got it and the salary was fifteen pounds a month. Once I started working in the theatre I realised that what I wanted to be is not a lawyer or a journalist but some kind of artist. I was 19, and I met my first husband who was the set designer in the puppet theatre. This marriage was a means of getting away from home, to be free and responsible for myself.

Will you explain the marriage laws and tradition in Egypt.

If any man wants to marry any girl he must go to her family and ask permission. He gives her parents money for her, depending on the wealth or poverty of the family. This starts at 25 pence to £25,000,—he also gives his bride gifts. But when I came to be married I was against all these traditions. I said I would only take 25 pence as this is the legal minimum and there is no other way to marry except by the strict religious law. Until 1923 all you had to do to get married was go with two witnesses to an old man in the town and say 'I want you' to each other and you were married. But nowadays the courts will not recognise any marriage that is not registered in the book. This helps the situation of the women and children a bit, but marriage, as with everything else in the capitalist world, is a trade of money for goods, the woman being the goods. So the first thing I said to my husband was 'I will not take any money and you are not to go to my parents.' The marriage paper states that if the husband divorces the wife he must pay her a quarter of his salary for one year, so I wrote down that he is not obliged to pay me anything if he divorces me.

We hear tales of men saying 'I divorce thee' three times, is this literally true?

In a way, the man can send his wife a paper saying 'I divorce thee' and there is

nothing she can do about it. She cannot divorce him though and only if he has been away from her for four years, in jail or something, can she go to the court and get a divorce. A man can still have four wives at the same time in Egypt although in Tunisia they have changed these bad laws, and they have to divorce properly and are only allowed one wife. The Moslem religion, as with most religions, is very anti-women. The most terrible thing in the religion that they do to women is the clitorrectomy.

This is the cutting off of the clitoris?

Yes. All Moslem girls have this operation because they believe that girls must not feel sex as men do. So they cut the clitoris off because if they leave it there she will become a prostitute or go with lots of men when she is married. It is not written in the religious laws, it is just a custom. I remember very well the day when they told me to have this operation. I was eight years old. I didn't understand anything, it usually happens when the girl is between 3 and 5 so I was quite a bit older, and I knew all my sisters had had this done. My mother and my aunt deceived me—they said they would just take me there to examine it and they would not cut anything. We couldn't go to the doctor as we had no money, so we went to the old lady in the village who does these operations, every town has these old women, who do it for one pound. She was a terrifying old woman. My mother and my aunt sat me down and each took one of my legs and held them stretched apart. The old lady came close to me with a very sharp razor blade and said 'By the name of God' and cut this little piece of flesh off. They gave me some sweets afterwards but I cried a lot and couldn't walk properly for two weeks.

What sort of sex education were you given?

I heard from about eight years old about girls going with men and was told I was never allowed to do this until I was married. The first person I ever saw naked was my husband. I never saw either of my parents, and even with my husband we made love with the lights out. I did make love a few times before my marriage, but I am unusual. The operation affected my sex life very deeply, I am disgusted by the sexual connection between me and men and I feel guilty.

It's twenty five years since you had the operation, does it still happen in the same way to other girls?

Not in the middle classes so much, as people understand things better now, but in the working class and the farmer class it is still the same, where will they learn any different?

They still marry their daughters off at ten years old, even though it is against the law to marry till sixteen. The parents simply go to the doctor and tell him they have lost the birth certificate of the girl and for a sum of money he makes a new birth certificate saying she is sixteen. My mother-in-law was married at ten to a

husband of twenty five but she didn't like him so she escaped and ran to her mother. Then when she was twelve they married her again. She wasn't even menstruating the first time.

What changes are being made, if any, for women generally in Egypt?

Nasser made a ministry of social affairs which is for women, family affairs, charity, those areas. He appointed a woman who was a professor at the university to head this department. She tried very hard to change the laws for marriage, divorce, children etc. and she managed some little changes but eventually they always referred back to God, and as he had made these laws so they had to be obeyed, so we still fail. Between 1952 and 1972 we built more mosques than schools and 75% of Egypt is still illiterate so change will take a long time yet.

Are you still a practising Moslem?

In our religion anyone can kill me in the street without any penalty if I reject the religion, but nowadays even people who go to the mosque every day and pray are not following the religion.

When did you marry again?

Two years after my divorce. My present husband is a revolutionary poet. I was fascinated by his work before I met him and as soon as I met him I decided to marry him. We married after fifteen days. It's not a very big love story, we really discovered our relationship after marriage. We have the same attitudes to life and he is very progressive and believes in women's liberation. He believes that only if I am satisfied in my own work will I live happily with him so he has helped me a great deal. He makes no demands on me, I used to spend all day at the film school in Cairo not getting home till seven o'clock and he never complained and now I am in London without him and he believes it is the right thing for me to do.

Is there a women's movement in Egypt?

No. Although there is a consciousness among some women. I read the 'Second Sex' by Simone de Beauvoir many years ago and this affected my life very much. Also I discovered myself while my husband was in prison. He was imprisoned for being a communist, like many others at that time. No women were imprisoned and one friend cried out when they came to arrest her husband 'Take me too, I am like him, why don't you arrest me?' 'We don't want you to be a hero' they said, 'we will not put any woman in jail and give her the chance to be a martyr!' But when all our husbands were arrested I found myself. I organised the women to fight for the husbands in jail. We wrote letters, sent telegrams, and went everywhere protesting. We also had to send money and food to the prison as they give them really bad food. My husband was arrested and imprisoned without trial. He spent one month in solitary confinement. I was never allowed to visit him and he wrote no letters, they were not allowed to read or write. He spent nine months in

prison altogether and was only released when Egypt formed an alliance with Russia just before the six day war against Israel.

What sort of films do you want to make when you return to Egypt?

In Egypt all the cinema is entertainment, romance, thrillers. The producers say the people want to escape from our world. They never ask the people what they want. We have had a cinema industry for 45 years and produce 100 films a year. I want to make documentary films. I want to record everything in our country, our history, our traditions, our way of life. There is no sense of history with the filmmakers in Egypt. My dream is to make revolutionary films, but there we have a great struggle. Even with my film 'Horse of Mud', when the five censors saw it they said I must take out some scenes and some of them even said it was banned completely. They said we could not show our people like that. If I was afraid I would not fight for the film, but I decided that this is our reality and we must not put our heads in the sand. I went to talk to the head censor and she is very nice. She said 'I know it's very honest, but it's very hard to see this after twenty years of the revolution, to see that circumstances are still as bad as ever.' I said 'Yes, but it exists, I didn't get actors to make this film, it is not from my imagination, the people are like that and speak those words.' She understood my need to make it but she was paralysed by laws and she was also afraid for her job. In the end they passed the film but not for the commercial cinema. The result of this is that we end up putting the censor inside us. If I had thought about the censor before I made this film I would never have made it. We must make what we want and fight for it. They can do anything to me but I have to be myself and speak the truth, because the truth always wins in the end. I will make my work and then fight for it.

Horse of Mud will be shown during the Women's Film Festival at The National Film Theatre beginning on April 1st.



DREAMS OF PINK BEARS

Short story by Claire Villiers



The bare fact of it was I was browned off with selling bears specially pink nylon bears. I knew it was time I gave that job up before it killed me. My mother said rubbish. It was only for the Christmas toy season so where was my sticking power? I told her I was even dreaming about the bears which couldn't be a good sign. Did she want to hound me into a nervous breakdown? She said nonsense, why I'd only been in bears a few weeks. Where was my backbone? I should make a regular appointment to have my hair done properly because in a job like that I might meet a millionaire which was true. Not everyone could walk into the toy department and say right wrap me up a bear! They were incredibly dear bears. I was there when they sold the biggest bear in the world to a popstar for his first born and I saw the second biggest bear in the world knocked down to a little brown short arse Charlie in a brown fur coat, brown fur hat and smoked glasses. He padded away on feet that were fur booted looking so exactly like a brown bear himself I wondered what he would possibly want another one for? I myself had an enquiry from a drunken fur coat lady who thought it would be fabulous fun to give pink elephants away to EVERYONE but when she heard the price they were she said 'Let's not get too twee about this, everyone' and wandered ginnily away again without actually buying anything. There were days when no-one bought a bear at all or even a small blue felt mouse, days for wearing my elbow sleeves out and reading my horoscope but whatever my stars said about unequalled opportunities for rapid advancement on the world field it all boiled down to bears and very boring too.



My mother said how grateful I should be to work with such interesting people, resigned actors, writers looking for colour. N.B.G. me trying to get it through my mother's fat head that we did have actors, mainly interesting to themselves, and as regards writers, who in their right mind would write a book about bears? Such colour from a pink nylon teddy factory. REEDICULOUS. The bods in bears were as bored as I was but in an older more shagged to death style. We were all dead broke, a bit barmy and sure we were only doing it for the timebeing. We all read our stars and borrowed money off each other and ate biscuits and a touch of tomorrow-will-be-a-better-day ran through the whole department. I deluded myself I was a cut above the others on account of having started Russian Part One, Lesson One. I wanted a departmental, round, shiny badge with 'Russian' on it but I was being over optimistic—there was eighteen months solid slog in getting the alphabet off, but anyway I found out something they didn't know. About manyana being Russian for bear, I thought by rights I should be a writer because I had the right unhappy background for it, if book blurbs were anything to go by. I write round thirty six agencies, thirty four never write back and two

said no thanks. I write round them all again and won a real live interview with an octogenarian mitten wearer who wondered if I'd ever thought about typing. I'd had nightmares about it and would rather have swept the streets or walked the streets or got a straight job or got married.



Now I got referred to a battleaxe in the office who asked where was I educated, for goodness sake? practically being sick into a paper bag. I blew myself up to Public School and On Continent—only half a lie having once nearly gone on our school's day trip to Boulogne. I waved at her a story I had written on firm's paper, firm's time about the Love Life of a Lesbian Lavatory Lady. Her face went O for orange and she asked who had published such a story, for goodness sake? I went too far and told her it had been done by the B.B.C. Read in it's naughty entirety on Midmorning Story. Battleaxe got on her hot line to the B.B.C. about it. She swallowed the three years I stuck on my age and the eleven schools I'd scrubbed round but refused to believe I'd been done by the B.B.C. She insisted on me being sent to a psychiatrist for industrial assesment or something and in the middle of an ink blob test a certain strangeness occurred. In front of my eyes the inkblobs became pinkblobs, little pink teddies. I was bursting to blab out a hundred pyromaniacal ideas about bear fantasies. Singeing their pink plush with lighted matches, gouging out their glassy expressionless round eyes. Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes and Character. Disembowelling the bigger bears, hacking and disfiguring them, sawing the goolies off them with rusty razor blades, throwing their bodies in a heap. Bursting into the boardroom bare hands dripping with bear blood, hitting the managing directors, making them watch from fourth floor windows while a pit was dug outside ready to receive the mangled distorted bodies of bears not even their mothers would know.



A bear bonanza. An incredibly macabre building, high bonfire of bears with Old Fasto the head bear buyer stripped naked and rubbed in oil and tied to the top like a fairy on a Christmas tree. Office windows would open first time ever. Typists be let off the chain early and a pall of pink nylon bear smoke hanging over the City of London. Nothing left of the bears but heads on spikes and hearts in basins and squeaks amongst the rubble and what would Father Christmas bring the kiddies after that? 'Er inkblobs' I suggested. The psychiatrist looked downright disbelieving 'You're saying you can only see inkblobs?' I nodded. 'Only inkblobs. Sorry' and shrank, shrivelled with shame, out of the office and away from the block. Maybe if I'd been inventive and made out they were fantastically phallic as far as inkblobs went, maybe if I'd shouted out they were all a load of cock I would have got to be something big in advertising instead of which I sell bears, seasonally, of course.



Speak out on Discrimination at Caxton Hall photo by Angela Phillips

SPEAKERS



Angela Phillips

the home and typing their letters and cleaning their floors and making their tea. They believe that society is a free for all in which the best absolutely naturally come to the top and if women go to the bottom of the heap it is because it is their natural place. On the other side of the house you get the ones that come in pink, the ones who are supposed to be our friends. I do not believe they are our friends, they do not want the Bill, not because they believe there is no discrimination, but because they know there is far too much and if this Bill goes through there is going to be an absolute flood of people coming to the courts who have been discriminated against and the courts would be held up for years. Now the real question is what are we going to do about it? I do not believe that we should be a woman's lobby. I believe we should be in 'there', not in this hall, and I believe that we should use the one thing we've got which up to now we have forgotten about. We have got the vote and I think it is time that we made clear to those gentlemen, the Honourable Members, that we do not intend to give them our vote again unless there is a thorough change of heart.

Unknown Housewife

I'm 40 and I once had a so-called 'good' education. I then took a great many years off because I wanted to look after my kids and I now want to go back to work and every day I scan the ads and even the secretarial jobs which could perfectly well be done part-time are full time jobs. Three weeks holiday they advertise as though this is a great gift. What do you do about the kids in the holidays? Now this is something where we might get together. Pressure must be put on employers to provide more part-time work and on schools and communities and youth clubs to provide more help to mothers who want to go back to work. I know many who are reduced to doing pathetic jobs, well below their capabilities for five, six, seven quid a week because they are only able to work nine till four or something like that. They are also forced to dump their kids on other women.

Eva Figs, Writer

Every woman in this country is discriminated against, in some way or other, even if she doesn't know it. Now there's a club down the road and it has 600 members, and 96% of those members are male and think that they represent us. I think that is a fairly clear reason why the Bill has been thrown out again. If you want to analyse it a bit further, let me say they come in two sorts, these men, they come in blue and pink. The blue ones think that women are not discriminated against and therefore there is no need for the Bill. They think that woman's natural place is in

Baroness Seear, House of Lords

Sooner or later, without a doubt this legislation or something very like it will be on the Statute Book.

Use it in every way you can and what is more use the opportunities it's designed to provide. BE READY for the jobs which will become available to women. Nothing could be more harmful than for jobs to be advertised for opportunities to be there and for grounds to be given for the accusation which is sometimes made at the present time and sometimes made superficially with justice. I say superficially because one knows the reasons why, when the opportunities are there, women don't take them. Now to be in the position to take full advantage of it means preparation now it means preparation among girls at school among choosing of subjects they are going to study; choosing what they are going to do when they leave school for whatever kind of further training they are going to get and in jobs that women do when they get the opportunity to come back after they have been bringing up their families. GET READY NOW TO TAKE THOSE OPPORTUNITIES. Because it will be a frightful letdown to you if when we have this legislation, and I believe it will be sooner rather than later, the people who haven't wanted it are able to point at us and say look we told you so'.

Mrs. Dorothy Bennett, Speaker for the National Council for Single Women

I'm an Old Age Pensioner and I represent the National Council for Single Women and Their Dependents. My mother suffered from arthritis and my father had a slight stroke in 1948 which left him with a weak left leg. He was more active than mother and did the shopping but I had to go home whenever they wanted the car driven. In 1961 father had a severe stroke paralysing his right side with a loss of speech. He was admitted to hospital and soon after that my brother and his wife said to me 'what are you going to do about it?' I didn't think father would live long and suggested that I could

look after him with mother.

In 1963 encouraged by my mother I gave up my full-time job and went home to sort things out and I was home for two or three weeks which reduced my pension by 2½% because I'd broken my term of service. I then got a part-time job so that I could pay my insurance stamp and have a bit of cash. That lasted three years and then I came home one day and found my mother stuck in her chair. She'd been there practically all day because she'd had a right-sided stroke and she couldn't get out of the chair so that meant the end of the part-time job.

As a single woman I could not get a housekeeper or nurse tax allowance.

Had I not been able to care for my parents they would have become the responsibility and expense of the state, and I would have had the distress of visiting them, possibly in two different institutions.

There should be a benefit which she could claim in recognition of the fact that she is giving a most valuable service to her parents and the community by caring for them in their own home. Her insurance card should be given full credit because all her social insurance rights are fully protected while she is thus technically unemployed, an exemption certificate as issued now doesn't cover this. When a woman gives up work its vital that she should be able to continue her insurance contributions as an unemployed person because if she does not her entitlement to retirement pension will be affected and she may find that after years of caring for her relatives and sacrificing her wages she is not able to claim full state pension. (SUS APP).

Mary Richardson, National Union of Students

Many of you will realise, having children of your own or being very close to those who are being brought up at the moment, that things have not changed very much in the last 20 years or so. Children are still being separated off according to their sex at a very young age. We still have this incredible state of affairs where by young boys and young girls are taught to play in different ways, the doll syndrome for girls and the train for boys.

I don't know whether you know but at O level stage girls do better than boys, yet the pressures are so great by the time of the A level stage that women are dropping out like flies.

They are forced into subjects which are not academically orientated and therefore excluded from many of the further education and higher education courses.

Jill Tweedie

What I'd like to say about children in general is, it seems to me its about time that men were made to realise by every individual woman that it is his child too! I get absolutely fed up with the fact that here we all are and we are all discussing ways in which children can be looked after in holidays, when they're ill or whatever it is when the Civil Service are doing their flexible arrangements. The fact is why don't men worry what happens to their children in the holidays. Why should they rely on their wife to come up with some solution when in many cases over other things that she does he thinks she's an idiot and not capable of organising anything. Yet the two children or three children that they have,—whom he probably has wanted just as much as her; and in some cases more,—all of these responsible decisions are made by her and are not questioned by him.

Anne Sharpley, Journalist

Of the B.B.C's 70 executives only 4% of them are women. Now you might say all very well, you're sure the chaps make the right decision, but they don't. Their whole bias, the whole structure, the choice, the almost minimal quality of the masculine structure come through in every way, in our language, in our humour, in every section no choice is made that has no masculine bias. I know people have a sense of humour, this is a joke. A woman rushes into a bookshop and says I want something to read, and the assistant says, something light or heavy, she says, it doesn't matter, I've got

the car outside. (SCATTERED TITTERS-VERY SCATTERED) HA, bloody HA, that's a typical silly woman. Try and reverse that, and put the man into that position, it isn't funny. We are all so trained to think of ourselves as idiots, but even we laugh and you know quite well how untrue it is.

Audrey Wise, Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers Labour Candidate for Stafford

The Trade Union Movement only thinks that it's a male club—it isn't really. Now I would suggest for instance that you all—perhaps you can't attend all your Union branch meetings all right—at least go along to the voting meetings, at least vote for those women who do go month after month, at least see that you get some women shop stewards and some women executive members and I think you will then find that it's worthwhile going on some other occasions. But start at least by going and wielding some of the power that you've got.

Now somebody mentioned the need for women to have proper jobs by which she meant jobs which stretch your mind, jobs which have intrinsic satisfaction. Well I want to tell you all that it isn't just women who haven't got proper jobs on that description it's the majority of the population who haven't got proper jobs. And what I want from all these women trade unionists is that they will start kicking up and saying right, you've conditioned us to be mothers but we are people. We are not going to allow workers to be treated like cogs in machines. Now unfortunately, the Trade Union Movement as a whole, although I am all for it, although I think it stands between the worker and degradation, nevertheless it doesn't stand tall enough and it allows inhumane working conditions. 'I'm not very fond of the ladder of opportunity. I want there to be a great plateau with opportunity not just to ride on top of other people but for everybody to ride, and in my opinion women have got the chance if they develop the will and they develop in it to be the greatest agent in making work humane.'

SUB NORMAL SECURITY

When their first child was born his parents had to face the fact that George was mentally handicapped, —George was a mongol. Mr and Mrs H. gave the boy all the love, care and all the skill they could muster and he improved a little. But there still remained for them—as for all other parents in the same situation—the nightmare of what would happen to him if they could no longer care for him and—when they died? Today George is 23, secure for life on a very special farm-village, where he and some 37 other handicapped young men and women have comfort of family life, good accommodation (each has his or her own bed sitting room) and purposeful, creative work on the estate. Blackerton was a run-down farm house on the edge of Exmoor, with 120 acres of land. It was here, 6 years ago, that Peter Forbes started to rehabilitate the property and to create the 'village' that means security to the mentally sub-normal. Peter Forbes is an artist and horticulturalist, onetime teacher at a school for the mentally handicapped in Bristol, who realised that the problem of the future of these young people could be solved in making them secure for life in their own 'villages'—and who started C.A.R.E. (Cottage and Rural Enterprises) to run Blackerton as the first of these 'villages'. George's father, a London professional man, found in this the answer for his son and George became one of the first 'villagers'. Their work is purposeful—and enjoyed: the farm shows a healthy net profit with stock rearing as its most paying unit: there are the 8 acres of cultivation and greenhouses, the unit for making concrete blocks

which are sold and other activities claim and hold attention of the retarded, the autistic, maladjusted, brain-damaged and others. There are three categories of people at Blackerton:—Villagers, Junior Staff (Villagers who can be upgraded and given a small wage and much encouragement), and Staff—these last most carefully selected and, in the main, young—the same average age as their charges: and paid properly.

Even at to-day's inflated costs, it takes £2,400 to establish a place as against the £5,000 or more that is needed to establish a place in an official residential hostel with none of the amenities. The cost of maintaining a villager has risen from £10 to £12 a week to around £20. Some families can support their children but for those who cannot there are bursaries available from funds raised and many Local Authorities are placing and supporting their subnormal young people with C.A.R.E. And now a second Village is on the way on land given by Mr Jack Townsend at Shangton in



They sell their produce—here is a 'villager' with glasshouse produce which sells well in the open market.



The workshop at Blackerton.

Leicestershire, which will be the site of cottages, a village hall, headquarters accommodation, workshops and greenhouses. In 12 months Mr Townsend, who is in charge of fund raising, has raised the £100,000 needed to make a start: Shangton should be open next spring. C.A.R.E. is also planning another village and will go on expanding. Peter Forbes stresses that when they get going these Villages should be self-supporting.

All details can be obtained from Mr Jack Townsend, The Manor House, Shangton, Leicester, LE8 0PP. and Blackerton East Anstey, Nr Tiverton, Devon is worth a visit.

WHOSE CREDIT?

By April 1st there won't be a woman—or man—on Teesside who has not had a chance to sign their name in protest against the government's tax credit scheme. If public reaction in the North East is any indication of the feelings of the rest of the country the family allowance will never leave the hands of those who need it—the mothers.

Carol Birchall, writing in the Middlesborough Evening Gazette, explained the situation at length, offering to obtain petition forms from The Married Women's Association and distribute them to any reader willing to collect signatures.

'I haven't got over the shock yet' said Carol, who is not married but vehemently against the legislation. 'I booked 500 forms to start with but within four days I had only four left and had to send for a further 500.'

One housewife has already returned 26 petitions, each containing 44 signatures, which she collected by tramping from door to door in her neighbourhood. Many men are collecting too, as well as official organisations such as the Labour party, probation officers, who hand them out to prisoners wives and dependants, and the juvenile court assessment centre.

'We have had sacks of letters supporting us' said Carol 'and I intend keeping the ball rolling right up to April 1st which is the date set to receive public objections.'

By bringing the means of protest right down to immediate local level the Evening Gazette has given a voice to every individual on Teesside. And that voice is a very adamant 'NO'.

Jean O'Keeffe: Teesside

CLASSIFIED ADS

● Sappho Magazine. Published by homosexual women for all women: Monthly 30p inc. post. BCM/PETREL, LONDON WC1V 6XX. Meetings first Monday each month. Upstairs Room, 7.30 pm Euston Tavern, Judd St/Euston Road, London NW1.

● Exclusive female only correspondence contacts, etc. For details without obligation send SAE — "Ariadne", The Golden Wheel, Liverpool L15 3HT.

● Weight Training. Opportunity for women to train regularly with other enthusiasts in London area. Details Box No: 101

● Working weaver requires small loom. Will collect. Write to: Jan Blancy, Maeshir, Bala, Merionethshire, Wales.

● FOR SALE: Old fashioned single bedroom suite, comprising wardrobe, dressing-table, chest of drawers and single bed. £15.00 o.n.o.

Metal framed studio couch £5.00

Two satin bridesmaid's dresses size 10–12, one gold, one royal blue, £1.50 each.

Fringed suede waistcoat size 10–12, £3.00

Pifco hair dryer — £1.50

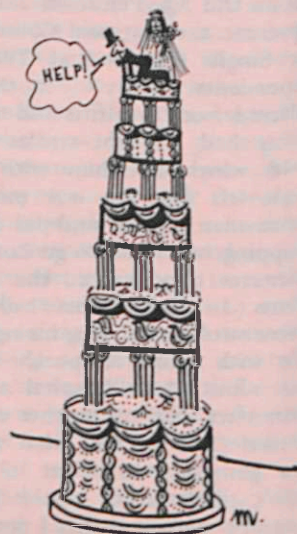
phone Marian 437-2070.

● Pregnancy Testing Fast. Reliable. Confidential. Post very small urine sample. Result next day. Phone or letter. Fee £2.00. If required plain sealed envelope supplied containing specimen container, information and first-class return packaging—Stroy Consultants, Ambit, Wych Elm House, HARLOW, Essex. Harlow 24579 (9.30 a.m.—9.00 p.m.)

● Wanted: Country cottage, with view, within 2 hrs. drive of London, sleep 6-8 if poss. adequate kitchen facilities and space, h/c water, telephone. Reliable tenant. Phone Carmen Callil 01-352 6634

● Psychotherapist (Jungian) now has vacancies, Highgate area Tel: 01-348 5593

● HELP: pregnancy testing advice etc. 402 5233



● Advertising Executive 26 years old and very lonely heterosexual transvestite seeks sympathetic woman living anywhere in the South East with a view to a genuine friendship. Please reply to Box No:102

● Do you need (up to) £1,250? on offer to any worthy scheme(s). Please phone The Alternative Society Ideas-Pool c/o 01-229 8219 to be sent details.

● North American women resident in the U.K. are invited to join the London chapter of NOW-National Organisation of Women. For further details please ring 01-272 9027 or 01-352 1964

● SEX-AIDS: Do you know that 90% of sex-aids are designed for the benefit of women? Why not find out all about them? Send 15p. for our 36 page colour catalogue. Pellent Ltd., Dept. R.I., 1a West Green Road, London, N.15.

● PREGNANCY TEST & INFORMATION SERVICE Send small urine sample and fee £3 for reliable and strictly confidential result by first-class return post (plain sealed cover). Or request free container, literature or information. GARDER LABORATORIES, High Road, Chigwell, Essex. Telephone: 01-500 3647

● Business people. New serviced one-room units. Own kitchen. Communal lounge. Leytonstone, E.11. Single £9.50 Double £11.50 01-539 7286 or 01-508 7268.

● Womens Liberation Workshop, 3 Shavers Place, SW1 (telephone 01-839 3918) ALL women welcome. Send SAE for information.

● We People removals, decorating, carpentry, electrics, cleaning, baby sitting—727 1228/6541

● CONTACTS UNLIMITED.

The dating service that always pays personal attention to selecting dates that really appreciate you and your scene. Free questionnaire 01-387 8150 (24 hrs), or 2 Gt. Marlborough St., W.1.

Books for the Women's Movement—Available by Post

Feminism: The Historical Writings	£1.20
Rebel in Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman	£2.00
Sisterhood is Powerful	£1.00
Self-defence for Women	£1.00
Feminism and Art	£1.00
The Diary of Anais Nin. 4 vols. Each	£1.25
Female Liberation. Hist. and Current Politics. Ed. Roberta Salper	£1.75
Women Unite (Canada)	£1.50
Feminism and Socialism. Ed. Linda Jenness	80p
The Body Politic	60p
Everywoman. A Gynaecological Guide for Life	60p
Margaret Sanger. An Autobiography	£2.00
Alexandra Kollontai. Autobiography of a sexually Emancipated Woman.	£1.30
Woman as Force in History Mary R. Beard	92½p
Voices of the New Feminism. Ed. Mary Lou Thompson	£1.25
Notes from the Third Year: Women's Liberation	75p
Women, Resistance & Revolution. Sheila Rowbotham	£2.95

We can supply any book in print. Ask to receive our full list of Women's Liberation titles. And 10% for p.&p. BOOKS, 84, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds 2. Phone 42483

DONT PLAY FOOTSY FOOTSY WITH ME (OR, THE BOOT'S ON THE OTHER FOOT NOW.)

There seems to be only one way to get decent service from shoe shops—and that's to say you work for a women's magazine. Marion, who does the advertising for Spare Rib, bought a pair of boots, costing £12.00 from Ravel in Oxford Street on Tuesday the 13th of February. She wore them for about 5 minutes, but found they were so uncomfortable that she had to take them off. The following day Marion returned to Ravel and said the boots were hurting her. The manager (Mr Higgins) agreed to have them checked and told her to return on Thursday.

Thursday: the manager said he could find nothing wrong with the boots, even though it was obvious that the side seams were badly machined and rubbed her feet and also that the inner sole was not properly fitted. He offered to change the boots for another pair, but, after trying on half the boots in the shop, Marion found that none of them really fitted, nor did she like any of the other styles, so she asked for her money back. 'No', said Higgins, 'the boots have been worn in the street'. (Surely if he was prepared to give her another pair, the boots were going to be sold to someone else anyway?) 'The only thing to do', he said 'is to send the boots back to head office for repair, but it'll

VOTED OUT

Bad News, the all male-electorate of Lichenstein refused, again, to give women the vote—by a larger margin than ever before.

take a fortnight'. As Marion was going away in a few days and wanted the boots, this was useless. So she decided to phone Ravel's head office and told them she worked for a women's magazine. Instantly their tone changed and whilst she was on the phone, they phoned Higgins and instructed him to give Marion a cash refund. She went back to Ravel's the following day and asked for the money, which was refused; instead, Higgins offered her a credit note. She asked him to verify Birch's (Head man at Ravel) decision by ringing him while she was in the shop. This he refused to do on the grounds that he didn't have a telephone in the shop! Marion stormed out of the shop and phoned Head Office from the nearest call box. She told them what had happened and while she was on the phone, Birch, using another phone in the same office phoned Higgins. The conversation, which Marion could overhear, went something like this:

Birch: It's not worth the agro, she works for a magazine.

Higgins is obviously arguing madly.

Birch: Well, make a special case this time. Birch's assistant returned to speak to Marion and

authorised her to go back to the shop to get the money. On returning to the shop she finds that Higgins has somehow disappeared and an assistant is there to give her the money. On the way out she see Higgins crouching in the window pretending to fix the display. She knocks on the window and waves the money at him. Higgins turns an interesting colour. End of story. One point worth mentioning is that at no time did Ravel try to find out what magazine Marion worked for, let alone bother to ring up to check it.



HOLLYWOOD

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Mary C. Brown And The Hollywood Sign

Also available on cassette TCK 29435 and 8 Track cartridge 8XU 29435

PLASTICS PUSHERS

Despite our article 'Pass the Parcel' in issue no.9 in which Pat Barr criticised large companies for using plastic packaging because it is environmentally undesirable, the following press release turned up in the office the other day from the British Plastics Federation, entitled 'Pluses for Plastics Packaging'. 'Plastics packaging is without a doubt one of the main contributors of modern living and to labour saving activities. Today supermarkets take plastic for granted and it must not be forgotten that the hygiene aspects of plastic greatly aid the efficient handling and maximum preservation of perishable goods. The purpose of packaging is to attract the consumer, often we are persuaded to buy a product because the packaging is so attractive and undoubtedly the product is sometimes even bought purely for the packaging, as in the case of some cosmetics. Plastics packaging in the community is of major importance to the continued prosperity and convenient handling of every family today (convenient to who and properous to who?, we ask). The industry is aware of the litter hazard that discarded packages could cause if not controlled. However, plastics account for a relatively small proportion of general litter and it is *encouraging* (our italics) that the industry is producing in ever increasing numbers *plastic* (our italics) dustbins, liners and garbage sacks. (create garbage, then make more garbage to take the first lot away — well, it's one way to support an industry).

GROUPS

The 'Brighton Combination' was started in 1968; it was the brainchild of Jenny Harris and Noel Grieg, coordinator and director respectively. Actors trickled in. They acquired a building—a small converted schoolhouse off one of Brighton's main roads, where they ran a theatre-cum-disco-cum-cafe. This was a general success, but the building was small and greener pastures were searched for.

After touring a bit, the theatre group came to rest in Deptford, London SE8. A land where most kids see school as a meaningless prison; where neighbourhoods are being virtually destroyed by massive demolition and the construction

of huge concrete jungles euphemistically called 'estates'. A land with no cinema, one train which runs twice an hour, no tube—and where people talk of making a trip to 'London'. 'The Combination' based themselves at the Albany, a large very active and dynamically progressive community centre, which incorporates such activities as a claimants union, squatting group, housing scheme for single-parent families (there is one father), truancy project, Women's Action Group, and clubs of every ilk one can imagine. The activities came under the name of 'Arts Community Work.'

In the summer of 1971 they arrived, brighteyed and Full of Good Intentions, and their troubles began. Adults were wary, not to say downright suspicious, they figured that they were 'students' on some kind of weird anthropological mission, with Deptford under their microscopes. The kids were filled with animosity. They refused to believe that they weren't some new breed of authority figure which had to be smashed to the ground. Windows were broken, gear destroyed, egos bruised. The the not-to-be-deterred group (now numbering about ten, give or take a few) toiled on.

They tried everything. Ideas sprung up like mushrooms. Pub shows. Super rave-up (they hoped) parties. Shows for kids and with kids. Old people's parties, pantomimes, tea dances, New Year's Eve Torchlight Processions, Totters Show (involving comedian kids in costume travelling on horse and cart through the streets). Holiday fayres. Summer playschemes. Discos. They performed anywhere and anyhow people wanted them. Out of the darkness and chaos, people started saying hello to them on the streets. They still say that they are mad, but they say it with an affectionate gleam in their eyes.

Cindy Hymel

Photo by Chris Schwartz.



BIRMINGHAM TATTLE

Lisa Wood

One of the best things to come out of Birmingham is Uncareers (see Spare Rib No. 3) Their 'Directory of Alternative Work' is still available from 298b Pershore Road, Birmingham 5. It costs 20p.

THE PEACE CENTRE

One small retreat in the centre of the town is Birmingham's 'Peace Centre', 18, Moor Street ringway. It is a one roomed establishment which was opened in October 1971 as a meeting place in which people interested in a 'peaceful way of life for the planet' could congregate.

The 'Peace Centre' is a pleasant meeting place (with plenty of comfortable cushions) where people can buy such things as cut price brown rice, joss sticks and magazines ranging from 'Rolling Stone' and Lenin's 'What is to be Done' to 'Spare Rib'. Amongst the many local and community papers to be found in the 'Peace Centre' are 'Street Press', 'Grapevine' and 'Treacle Stick'. 'Street Press' was first published in March 1971 and today the circulation is 3000. 'Grapevine' was launched at the same time and has survived for twenty four issues. It is a monthly magazine covering meetings and events in the city, ranging from rock concerts to political meetings; as well as presenting articles posing an alternative to the local establishment press.

'Treacle Stick' is the voice of radical social workers in the West Midlands. The magazine examines social work concepts, what they mean in practice and how they are likely to mould people's attitudes. The circulation of the magazine is around 800 and rising. The centre does provide valuable amenities; where else in Birmingham could you leave messages on a notice board (there is one for individual messages and another for organizations), and somebody in the building is sure to be able to put you in contact with local help groups or give the addresses of other political organizations. After six the place remains open; it is used by Gay Lib., C.N.D. and Case Con, to name but a few.

HOUSING

The Gloomy side.

In order to grasp the number of people on Birmingham's housing list, visualize thirty packed cinemas—there are 24000 people on the list. Last year the council built 1450 new houses which hardly solved the

problem.

To get onto the housing list at all you need five unbroken years of residence in the city behind you. 'Shelter' and the Housing Advisory Committee agree on a figure of about twenty families a week who the Housing Department can't deal with. These are frequently mothers and children driven out of their homes by their husbands. Under the 1948 Housing Act the council has a legal responsibility to find accommodation for the homeless. But these people are not officially homeless. For emergency housing the city has only two hostels; one for men, known as the Highgate Hotel, and one for mothers and children.

The Moseley hostel was described in Shelter's 'Grief Report' on the homeless. It is a converted police station capable of accommodating eight to ten families, with some rooms measuring as little as nine feet by four feet.

The building has an immense studded door; a high wall topped by three stands of barbed wire guarding the rear block and several of the windows are barred. The head of The Housing Committee insists that Shelter's report is exaggerated. The bars, he says, are to prevent children from falling out of the window. A curfew is enforced at the hostel; the door is bolted from the inside at 8.00pm. As a result one woman was forced to give up evening classes. The warden commented, 'our rules are very reasonable, but no-one can expect to come here and break the rules we have.' Councillor George Canning said that the curfew was for the good of the children and part of a system which encourages the women to be responsible for their own 'households'.

The women at the hostel are only allowed to receive visitors between 5.00pm and 8.00pm and then they must remain in



the reception area. Husbands are forbidden to visit their wives outside these hours. However, Mrs Joan Collins, the warden, claims that she has had a 'fair number of successes' in reuniting separated couples. Shelter paints a horrifying picture of the warden describing how she admits to having sent away husbands in tears when they attempted to enter the hostel outside the permitted hours. They remark on her large alsatian dog. The warden insists that she keeps Sheba as a pet for the children in the building. Officials say that this is the best that can be done for Birmingham's homeless at the moment, 'while it is not an ideal place, we try to provide all the basic facilities.'

The Bright side

Voluntary services such as The St Basil's Centre are tackling the housing problem. This centre, a registered charity, revolves around disused church premises. A registered but non-practicing Vicar, Les Milner, has taken over the role of social worker, directing the centre's activities. These include work with West Indian children and Hell's Angels. But perhaps its best known activity is 'The Boots Night Shelter'. This is a rough but welcoming accommodation unit for homeless young people, often unemployed who, until they find a job, cannot find more permanent accommodation. The shelter is open from 8pm until twelve noon.

So at least about twenty young people can have a roof over their head for a few nights.

BIRMINGHAM ARTS LAB FILM FESTIVAL

The Birmingham Arts Lab in Tower Street (apologies for the wrong address in last month's issue) is holding a film festival from April 1-10 (with a special Latin-American late-night show on April 12) which deserves a standing ovation on the titles alone.

Outsmarting the smartest cinemas in the country, they have got four new films as yet unreleased over here, the biggest scoop among which is Cliff Robertson's first film as director, *J.W. Coop*. The other unseens are Warhol's *Blue Movie*, George Lucas' science fiction *The 1138*; *Dear Irene* a Danish film about sex and politics; and Bergman's *The Faro Document*. Also from Sweden, this time about Bergman, is Stig Björkman's unique study of the director at work on *The Touch*. And there are more

fascinating blues documentaries by Les Blank about Lightnin' Hopkins and guitarist Mance Lipscombe.

The festival is rich in outstanding new foreign films, few of which are likely to come to your local cinema: from Japan, Oshima's post-war family saga, *The Ceremony*; and Teshigahara's brilliant *Summer Soldiers*; Hungarian director Karoly Makk's *Love*, set in 1950's Budapest; writer Fernando Arrabal's first film *Viva La Muerte*; a splendid period piece from West Germany, Volker Schlöndorff's *The Sudden Fortune of The poor people of Kombach* Satyajit Ray's latest film (considered by many critics to be his best) *The Adversary*; *The Night of Counting the Years* the first Egyptian film to gain an international reputation; and from France, for kids and adults alike, Jacques Demy's sophisticated bit of enchantment, *The Magic Donkey*.

Two more American films, which ought to have done the rounds but for some reason never did, are the Taylor-Bologna comedy *Lovers and Other Strangers* and *A Date With a Lonely Girl*, worth seeing for Candice Bergen's excellent performance alone.

Finally, new British filmmakers, on different ends of the same shoestring: Tony Bicat and Christopher Mason. The former made *Skin flicker*, a study in terror with a difference, with the assistance of the BFI production board; the latter raised a tiny budget to make the ironically titled *All The Advantages*.

Programme times vary, check with the Arts Lab
Tel: 021-359 9192



SPARE TIME

Rosie Parker
WOMBATS AND WOMEN
Dante Gabriel Rossetti

The exhibition of paintings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti at The City Art Gallery Birmingham reveals Rossetti's immensely ambivalent attitude towards women. On the one hand they were 'stunners', precious only for their luxurious hair and pouting lips, and on the other hand they were quite simply his religion. He endowed women with mystical powers and declared that they contained the meaning of life: 'Sometimes thou seemest not thyself alone, But the meaning of all things that are.'

The exhibition contains innumerable portraits of Elizabeth Siddal the first woman to suffer from his ambivalent feelings. They met in 1850 when she was sixteen and working in a hat shop. Rossetti typically declared that his 'destiny was defined', and they moved into an isolated life together in a dank, dark house near Blackfriars Bridge. Rossetti spent his time drawing endless portraits of Lizzie, and encouraged her to start drawing and writing poetry. He believed that she was potentially more gifted than he was and neglected his own work in order to tutor her.

Though generous towards her talent he was immensely possessive in other ways, and very jealous of her one woman friend Emma. His compulsion to draw Lizzie was prompted partly by her long red hair and mysterious looks, and partly by this possessiveness. He admitted this in a poem called 'The Portrait', saying that he drew her in order to make her 'his own'. Lizzie soon contracted TB, and Rossetti, unable to resist passing 'stunners', was unfaithful with an earthy woman called Fanny Cornforth. In 1862 Lizzie was found dead with an empty phial of laudanum beside her. Rossetti turned to Jane Morris, and started collecting animals. He amassed a zoo of weird beasts (don't miss the sketch of Rossetti mourning his dead wombat), and painted countless enormous oils of Jane. (William Morris spent a convenient amount of time in Iceland) Rossetti's conflicting attitudes towards women are resolved in these exotic paintings of Jane Morris. In them he combined his sensual appreciation of women with his mystical view of them. He painted

Elizabeth Siddal By D.G. Rossetti

Jane as a goddess; a goddess who became more unobtainable, statuesque and sad as he succumbed to alcoholism and drug addiction. Birmingham City Art Gallery March 29th-May 6th

THE TRINITY ART CENTRE

The Trinity Arts Centre Project Camp Hill was finalised during the middle of last year when the City authorities decided not to demolish Trinity Church (the centre's nucleus) for a dual carriage way. The building itself was designed as a replica of Kings College Chapel, Cambridge but the latter has all its windows and does not stand next to the King Kong Kar Ko. garage. The Arts Centre has applied to the Arts Council and the City Council for financial aid. Meanwhile voluntary helpers are cleaning up the church and starting a community theatre, an adventure playground and a holiday play scheme. The holiday scheme will involve creative drama, and arts and crafts orientated around a 'Desert Island' theme, for local kids and others from Hockley Port.

Camp Hill Birmingham

THE WELFARE STATE Amazing fire bombing event. The group will use cello, voices, darkness and fire in an event specially commissioned by the Ilkley Literary Festival to take place in a quarry on Ilkley Moor. Cow and Calf Rocks above Ilkley Saturday April 28th

PS Don't miss The Welfare State at the Serpentine Gallery Kensington Gardens from Saturday May 12th

WOMEN'S CINEMA AT THE NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

On April 1st a season of films by women opens at the NFT. It will be an exceptional opportunity to see works of women pioneers of the cinema such as Germaine Dulac and Maya Deren who both played crucial roles in the development of the avant grade in France and America. And, of course, there will be examples of work by the large number of excellent new women directors who emerged during the sixties—Agnes Varda, Nelly Kaplan etc.

Programme dates (NFT evenings, except Saturday and Sunday when programmes begin at 4.00 pm)

April

1st *Dance Girl, Dance* (dir. Dorothy Arzner, USA 1940)

2nd *La Fiancée Du Pirate* (dir. Nelly Kaplan, France, 1969)

3rd *The Bigamist* (dir. Ida Lupino, USA, 1953)

3rd *Not Wanted* (dir. Ida Lupino) uncredited, USA, 1949)

4th *The Blue Light* (dir. Leni Reifensahl, Germany, 1932)

4th *Peasant Women in Ryazan* (dir. Olga Preobrajenskaia, U.S.S.R. 1927)

5th *Student Nurses* (dir. Stephanie Rothman, USA, 1970)

5th *Velvet Vampire* (dir. Stephanie Rothman, USA, 1971)

6th *Maedchen in Uniform* (dir. Leontine Sagan, Germany, 1931 plus a short by Lotte Reiniger)

8th shorts from the women's movement in America including *Growing Up Female* by Julia Reichert and Jim Klein, *Anything You Want to Be* by Lianne Brandon, *I Am Somebody* by Madeline Anderson and *It Happens to Us* by Amalie Rothschild.

9th *Destroy, She Says* (dir. Marguerite Duras, France, 1969)

10th *Three Lives* (prod. Kate Millett, dir. Louva Irvine, Susan Klechner, Robin Mide, USA, 1970)

11th *Never Fear* (dir. Ida Lupino, USA 1950)

11th *Wandu* (dir. Barbara Loden, USA, 1970)

12th Germaine Dulac, Maya Deren and the avant garde including *The Smiling Madame Beudet* by Germaine Dulac, France, 1922, *Meshes of the Afternoon* by Maya Deren, USA, 1943 (with Alexander Hammid) and films by Gunvor Nelson, Joyce Wieland, Storm de Hirsch and Carolee Schneeman.

14th Forum and open screening of women's films beginning at 2pm—free admission (seats not bookable in advance) An informal discussion on women film-makers and their relationship to the industry and the media—all women welcome—anyone who wishes can show her work and discuss it.

14th Shorts from the women's movement in Europe prog. 1 including *Out from Under* by Marion de Vries (Belgium), *The Point is to Change It* by Claudia Alemann (Germany—Women's Co-op), *Miss/Mrs* by Linda Dove (G.B.—London Women's Film Group), *Jemina, Fille des Montagnes* by Anielle Weinberger, (France).

14th Shorts from the women's movement in Europe prog. 2 including *L'Aggettiva Donna* by Annabella Miscuglio, *Does the pill liberate?* by Helke Sander (Germany—Women's Co-op), and *For Women—First Chapter* by Christina Perincioli (Germany—Women's Co-op)

15th *Papa Les Petits Bateaux* (dir. Nelly Kaplan, France, 1970) *Nelly Kaplan Lecture* (at 6.15pm)—an informal discussion about her ideas on women's cinema, with clips from her films to illustrate the meeting.

16th *Planet Venus* (dir. Elda Tattoli, Italy, 1972)

20th *Daisies* (dir. Vera Chytilova, Czech, 1967)

23rd *A New Leaf* (dir. Elaine May, USA 1970)

25th *Lion's Love* (dir. Agnes Varda, USA, 1969)

25th *Les Creatures* (dir. Agnes Varda, France/Sweden, 1966)

26th *You and I* (dir. Larisa Shepitko, U.S.S.R. 1972)

27th *The Lady from Constantinople* (dir. Judit Elek, Hungary, 1969)

30th *Women Talking* (dir. Midge Mackenzie, USA 1969/GB 1970)

30th *The Lizards* (dir. Lina Wertmuller, Italy, 1963)

May
2nd *Binding Sentiments* (dir. Marta Meszartos, Hungary, 1968)

4th *The Girls* (dir. Mai Zetterling, Sweden, 1968)

4th *The Cool World* (dir. Shirley Clarke, USA, 1963)

6th *The Wild Party* (dir. Dorothy Arzner, USA, 1930)

8th *To Dorothy A Son* (dir. Muriel Box, G.B. 1954) with *The Stranger Left no Card*, by Wendy Toye.

8th *The Truth About Women* (dir. Muriel Box, G.B. 1957)

9th *Love Under the Crucifix* (dir. Kinuyo Tanaka, Japan, 1962)

Nelly Kaplan, the director of 'la Fiancee du Pirate' and 'Papa Les Petits Bateau' who will be talking at the NFT on April 15th.



13th *Olympiad 6* (dir. Leni Reifenstahl, Germany, 1936)

14th *L'Ecole des Cocottes* (dir. Jacqueline Audry, France, 1957)

14th *L'Ingenue Libertine* (dir. Jacqueline Audry, France, 1950)

15th *The Arch* (dir. Shu Shuen, Hong Kong/USA, 1968)

17th *Brother Carl* (dir. Susan Sontag, Sweden, 1970)

17th *Duet for Cannibals* (dir. Susan Sontag, Sweden, 1969)

18th *La Vie Revel* (dir. Mirielle Dansereau, Canada, 1972)

21st *Faustine et le Bel Ete* (dir. Nina Companeez, France, 1972)

24th *Sambizanga* (dir. Sarah Maldoror, France/Congo 1972) with *Horse of Mud* by Atiat el Abnondi NB. In addition to the shorts listed, a number of other shorts will be shown in the season—dates will be announced nearer the time of opening

For women who are not members of the National Film Theatre: arrangements have been made that for the duration of the season of women's films, women who apply to the Women's Liberation Workshop (3 Shavers Place, S.W.1. tel. 839 3918) can obtain temporary affiliation with the NFT in order to buy tickets. (Prices of tickets are 30p and 40p.) A detailed programme is also available. Unfortunately, because most of the viewings will be held in the evening, it is very difficult to arrange creche facilities. However, on the first night (April 1st) there will be a playgroup at the South London Women's Centre, 14 Radnor Terrace, S.W.8 Tel. 622 8495.

There will also be an exhibition of women photographers' work in the foyer of the NFT, and two new publications—a pamphlet *Women's Cinema* (ed. Claire Johnston) and a useful handbook for women film-makers (ed. London Women's Film Group) will be on sale.

For further information contact Claire Johnston. Tel: 348 1977

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE UNDERNEATH

The glossy program notes for this film claim that it is an exploration of one woman's descent into madness. I found it more an exploration of one woman's (the director's) obsession with the manipulation of her characters both behind the camera and in front of it. I have learned to expect this kind of treatment of women from male directors but have rarely encountered it before with a female director. This is especially disturbing since the film has been labelled as 'feminist'. True, there is some remarkable imagery that depicts oppression that is specifically female—the ritual of marriage transformed into a macabre funeral, the self-love of masturbation turned into a whorish parody of self-hate, the crucifixion of Woman as eternal victim.

More striking, however, was the total lack of love or support among the women themselves. Most of them suffer anguish or cruelty at the hands of other women or at the hands of the director who has cast herself as a remote and calculating therapist for the group. The therapist she portrays differs minimally, if at all, from the terrifying and unemotional male authority figures that have damaged women for so long. It cannot be excused by claiming that women play all the male and female roles in this film because a real man does participate in the one apparently loving sexual encounter. Jane Arden allows her women to wallow in their own oppression

without providing either understanding or the incentive to acknowledge it and gather the courage to move beyond it. Nor does she ever make a clear distinction between behaviour that is a response to oppression and behaviour that is a response to madness. Confusing the two or treating them as synonymous is a dangerous ploy that has been used for centuries to push literally thousands of women into mental institutions. Women who have reacted violently against the limitations of the 'feminine role' have often been conveniently labelled 'mad'. It would have been more interesting (to me) if this film had tried to document more of the social factors that contributed to the rampant misery of all the characters. There is a scene at a country fair where one of the actresses, almost totally naked, tries to dance with an awkward young woman who is quite obviously mentally retarded while a young boy looks longingly at the naked woman's body. The boy finally steps in, puts his arms around her, she drops the other woman's hands and responds. The retarded woman, abandoned, turns in utter helplessness towards the camera—and bursts into tears. She has been had, her feelings have been toyed with by the will of others whom she cannot understand. This is how all the actresses seem to have been used in this film and how I felt as I left the theatre, disappointed and bored. And if boredom really is just a form of anger, then I am angry at yet another betrayal of women—and more anxious than ever to see a film that examines their strength and courage.

Ellen Leopold

WASTING AWAY

Adrian Forty, lecturer at Bristol Polytechnic, believes that what you throw away gives you away. Together with ten students he is mounting an exhibition of rubbish. The students have made private collections of waste over a prescribed period of time. They are exhibiting their collections not to beautify rubbish nor to make an ecological statement but to demonstrate how waste reveals personality and personal values—dustbinsight? Bristol Polytechnic, Clanage Road, Bower Ashton
March 26th—April 5th

Ed.—I refuse to consider this rubbish

OXFORD WOMENS INFORMATION SERVICE Run by women for women Ring Oxford 45301 any evening between 6pm and 7pm for information on where to go and who to contact about contraception, abortion, pregnancy, adoption, adventure playgrounds, legal problems etc.



WOMENS BOOKS, PAMPHLETS AND JOURNALS

Members of Bristol's Womens Liberation Group are setting up a book distribution service combined with an information service. Send your orders and inquiries to: 'Women's Books', 11 Waverley Road, Bristol. (donations and loans welcome)

SCHOOL GIRLS SLAVES OF SOHO

A group called 'Cabot' has recently returned from the USA. The two women and one man sing, dance, tumble and perform comic dialogue in a most grotesque form of drag, created by large caricature masks and extraordinary costumes, which give a comic-strip effect. Their recent show at the Dark and Light Theatre in Brixton, either turned people right off or right on.

The theme of the play 'Schoolgirl Slaves of Soho' follows the exploits of Games Captain Lilac and her adventures with Vadman, the world's filthiest porn baron, and his gay director, Lilac, a sixteen year old schoolgirl from Elephant and Castle, releases her two captive schoolmates and together they lead a Schoolgirls Revolution to 10, Downing Street.

At this point the show becomes a political reality with a film of real school girls handing in a petition at Downing Street. Their protest is about the double standard of adults' attitudes to Pornography; some are allowed to make millions out of it, while others are busted for it. Pornography exploits the female sex and school girls are the up and coming generation of porn material.

Within the film the story suddenly takes on a sober note; with schoolgirls, Whitehall police, cameras and press—nobody was playacting any more, except perhaps the Daily Mirror who, after a long intensive interview about the aims of the schoolgirls petition, still managed to twist the meaning into 'Schoolgirls demand to read Porn.'

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the 'Cabot' troupe and their strange mixture of fantasy and reality is the fact that they have one man in drag, and two women posing as dirty old men. It is probably the first time that a woman has ever played a gay man on stage. It is an audacious innovation, but maybe one which people are unwilling to accept as yet. You have plenty of men playing drag but not vice versa—the double standard still operates in the theatre.

If you want to see the three friends tumbling their way through 'obscene' comedies with a difference—watch out for them at the Theatre Upstairs where they will be appearing soon.



Bisexuality: the best of both worlds

Susana Allen was born in a small town in New Zealand 28 years ago. She left school at 16 and went to Wellington where she worked as an office clerk for three years while living in a flat with two other girls. When she was 19 she left New Zealand and spent three months travelling in America before coming to live in England in 1964. Shortly after arriving in this country she married a draftsman. The marriage lasted three years, during this time Sue was working and doing odd jobs—such as being a shop assistant at Cbanelle. After her marriage broke up she went to live with another man and started working as a stage manager in the Mercury Theatre, Notting Hill Gate. In 1968 she joined the BBC as a floor manager where she stayed until the summer of 1972. Susana Allen is now at the London Film School, where she is planning to make films on women in the coming year.

When I say I am bi-sexual people often react as though I have admitted some dreadful perversion. And yet we are all basically bi-sexual, and are all capable of reacting sexually not only to a member of the opposite sex, but to someone of the same sex. One of the main problems are the words—bi-SEXUAL, homo-SEXUAL. The implication is totally sexual and the assumption is that one spends all one's time having orgies of sexuality hardly surfacing to eat. Homosexuals have always suffered from this image when in fact a great many do not actually have sexual relations with the same sex companions they may live with and

love in exactly the same way as thousands of marriages are totally sexless. The fact is that a homo-sexual relationship is *less* likely to be purely sexual as one is more likely to have a deeper level of true understanding and friendship than in the hetero-sexual relationship. On the sexual level and in praise of the advantages of being bi-sexual I would say that it is obviously a bad thing to cut ourselves off from sexual pleasure and release by prohibiting contact with the very people we are most likely to have access to and understand. Especially in the many situations where it is impractical or impossible to be with someone of the opposite sex—widowed and divorced people, the same sex sharing a flat, women who don't happen to fall into the limited acceptable stereotype of female beauty or don't have too much choice where men are concerned—the obvious solution is to be with one's own sex.

It is only cultural, religious and social taboos that prevent this from happening and in some cultures it is the norm rather than the exception.

From my own experience I feel that women would particularly benefit from exploring this part of their nature, because it definitely makes one less vulnerable to men and better able to judge what one wants from a relationship with men. This is what happened to me.

By the time I was twelve I had experienced some sexual contact with females, the usual staying with each other, sleeping in the same bed, bathing together, studying each others development and occasionally masturbating each other. When I was thirteen I switched to boys and within a year was making love quite regularly with a seventeen year old boy at my school. I never thought about girls again in a sexual way until I got married at the age of twenty. A few weeks after the wedding I started having the most erotic dreams about women. One night I dreamt that I walked into a store in the King's Road and went to the lingerie department. It was a store I knew well. There were seven beautiful women lined up behind the counter each with an item of underwear spread in front of them. I walked slowly along and selected the woman I wanted. Not a word was spoken as she led the way to the back of the store. We went into a small changing room with mirrors all around and a large sofa against one wall. We looked at each other for a moment and then kissed very slowly, gently running our hands over each other's bodies. She was indescribably soft and erotic. After a while we undressed each other and lay on the sofa still kissing and caressing. At the moment I was about to have the greatest orgasm of my life I woke up to discover it was all a dream. I was still incredibly aroused so I made love to my husband, but the orgasm was very mediocre. I didn't sleep again that night. I lay there thinking about the dream and the desire stayed with me all that night and for days afterwards. Did it mean I was a lesbian? Why didn't I recognise any of the women? Would I like to make love to anyone I knew? I mentioned the dream to my husband, who looked at me strangely but didn't say much. I also told a friend who is a psychologist and he advised me to try and have some experience with women as I obviously had strong feelings that were not being released. But that was easier said than done.

I looked at my friends, I even contemplated going to a lesbian club but was too scared.

My mind always blocked when I tried to think of being in bed with a woman and doing the things to her that I did so easily with

men. I even found it difficult to tell any of my women friends about the dream, but had no trouble telling men. A few weeks later I had the dream again, almost identical but this time on waking I just masturbated to orgasm keeping my mind in the dream and it was very satisfying. The dreams then became frequent and regular and I learned to live with them and with the frustration of not being able to realise them in reality. I went through a stage when I expected to be seduced by some more experienced woman who would whisk me away and initiate me. This was the usual passive female role, always waiting to be approached/seduced by men and not being able to take the assertive role. Anyway it never happened. After three years my marriage broke up and soon I was living with another man. The dreams continued and sometimes changed. I dreamt several times that I was in bed with a woman and as I ran my hand down her body I found she had the penis of my lover, which was very disconcerting as there wasn't much female about him.

Then two years ago I was in a nightclub in Amsterdam with two men I was working with. At the next table were also two men and a woman. She was young, black and pretty. The men were incredibly drunk and appeared to have brought her along for the evening. She wasn't very interested in them and smiled at us a lot. She and I looked deeply at each other from time to time and I was very turned on to her. She came and signified that we should dance. I discovered she spoke no English but that didn't seem to matter, we were so obviously digging each other. Then we stopped dancing and returned to the table.

The men I was with were upset at the turn of events because they had both thought she fancied them.

She sat very close to me and occasionally squeezed my leg until we got up and danced again. I wanted her more than anything, and gradually we moved across the crowded, dim room to some hidden alcoves and sat down. We slipped into the seat, turned and started kissing each other. Immediately we were touching each other all over and I had two orgasms from wanting it so much all these years. I longed to take all my clothes off and really make love with her for hours but very soon we were interrupted by my two friends who took me back to the hotel as were all due at work early in the morning.

After this I was totally turned on to women and went around like some pubescent boy fantasising about all the women I saw. I was still living with a man and having good sex with him but I desperately wanted to explore this whole new world of feeling, because it was not just sexual it was emotional too.

A couple of months later I ran into a woman I had known vaguely for some years. She had just left her husband and we had dinner together. We sat in a restaurant for several hours talking and really enjoying each other. There was a very strong sensual feeling between us as well but it was never mentioned. I drove her home and went in for coffee. At 3a.m. she suggested I stay the night and we crawled into separate beds in the same room. I didn't know what to do about the fact that I wanted to sleep with her, so I went to sleep feeling that a great opportunity was passing me by. I woke about nine and got up to turn the heater on. She woke and said I should get into bed with her if I was cold and it was suddenly back to being twelve and innocent again. Her warmth and softness were overpowering and I lay very still beside her feeling the electricity rushing through my body, hardly able to breath with the pleasure.

We chatted amiably about nothing for a while and then I casually turned on my side and put my arm round her and started stroking her back.

She followed my move and did the same thing to me. The tension was mounting fast, but we still hadn't kissed or really looked at each other—it was as if we were concentrating totally on the incredible body sensations we were exploring together. There was

no need to speak. It was rather like being a virgin and having a first charmed sexual encounter but with a whole library of other sexual experience behind me to understand it with and with none of the inhibitions or fumbling of those original scenes.

I closed my eyes and tried to absorb what was happening to me. I felt as though a shutter was rolling back like an eyelid from some long hidden vestigial eye, so that I could see my self, a total self, a female self! I suddenly realised what being *female* felt like. I had only known myself from the male point of view till that moment. I had been brought up like all of us to dislike, distrust and rival women so naturally I had ended up with self loathing and distrust.

And now all those feelings of hostility, envy and competition were gone. I was digging her so much and being so turned on that I had to see that what I was responding to was the femaleness of us both. There were obvious physical differences that we both noticed. Most significant was the softness of her body, she was so light too, and afterwards neither of us felt physically brutalised or sore anywhere, even though we had made love for several hours.

The most significant thing though was the lack of anxiety of the 'was I good', 'did he like me', 'perhaps I shouldn't have said That', 'what will I do if he doesn't call'—variety. I went home later that day and we had made no promises or commitments and I was very happy about that, confident that things would work for the best whichever way they went. We went on seeing each other for some time and continued having scenes with men.

I immediately noticed that sex with men was better after this experience.

I have since that time had several scenes with women and continued also with men. The scope is much wider now and I only wish more women were turned onto their own sex as I feel a lot of male dominance is cancelled when you discover that you don't *need* a man to make love. I would also say that a woman is nearly always more satisfying simply because a woman knows what another woman wants and most men take a long time to find that out, if they can ever be bothered. The big worry about whether one would become completely lesbian after one or two scenes with a woman is of course nonsense, unless one actually discovers, belatedly, that one is definitely a lesbian, in which case it's no hardship to discover it. But most of us have found a new sort of freedom from challenging the taboos if nothing else. I know that a couple of the women I have been to bed with probably won't have a lot of sex with women but were glad of the experience.

Men seem either incredibly turned on or very threatened on learning that I am bi-sexual. One man terminated the evening when I told him, although we had been sleeping together for several weeks.

The problem of how to approach women was sorted out when I decided to be honest without being aggressively threatening.

If I am talking to a woman and the subject gets to men or sex, I say that I am bi-sexual and then it all depends on her reaction as to what happens.

One or two women are rather nervous around me as if they feel I am going to seduce them, in other words I am put in the category of a predatory male which is very sad but something I can't seem to do much about. Of course the Women's Movement has a lot to do with this developing bi-sexuality in women simply because we are learning to know each other in a way our mothers never could and this knowledge quite naturally leads to sexual encounters just as it does with men. I usually find I know a woman much better before I go to bed with her and sex is nowhere near the most important part of the relationship, and I am much more likely to remain friends with her if we cease sleeping together simply because sex is only a minor part of the relationship. I am trying to get my heterosexual relationships to this level too as I feel it is much more preferable.



photographs by Ken Griffiths



REVIEWS

Dance

Gillian Freeman

The Royal Ballet New Group

Within the last decade the Royal Ballet has become, possibly, the finest company in the world. Others may have an older tradition—the Royal Danish, the Paris Opera, the Kirov, the Bolshoi—or stronger male dancers—the Russians certainly—but none has developed such an extensive repertoire, extending from the established classics to works by the most avant garde choreographers. Among these is Hans Van Manen from the Netherlands, whose *Grosse Fugue* is one of the ballets currently being performed by the Royal Ballet's touring section, The New Group.

This splinter of the major company has its origins in the old Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet which was based in that theatre. When the company was designated Royal it became the touring section, brilliantly directed and developed by John Field, and was frequently the launch-pad for young dancers emerging from the Royal Ballet School, who later graduated to Covent Garden.

In 1970 the company was reformed under a new director, Kenneth MacMillan, a product of the Royal Ballet School, a choreographer of great distinction, and until recently director of the Deutsche Oper Ballet in Berlin. The Royal Ballet embarked on a new policy. It was decided to drop the big, full-length ballets on tour, difficult to present in the often cramped accommodation available in the provinces, and to concentrate on shorter works, easier to transport and set up, and providing a greater number of roles for the dancers who were to work in rotation from a central London 'pool', with soloists from the resident company appearing with them. For the first time new works were to be premiered out of London, or at any rate out of the Opera House. *Grosse Fugue*, in fact, received its first British performance at the Odeon, Temple Fortune, in North London. If some Beethoven lovers objected to the content as being too slight and out of keeping with such a massive fugal work, it was hard to deny its visually erotic impact, the three female dancers in body-tights, the three men naked to the waist in heavy, cossack-like split skirts, which they shed to reveal belted black leather knickers. (For those who care it is the men this time, and not the women, who are presented as sexual objects!) It is invidious to single out

ballets from an extensive repertoire. The New Group performs old favourites from the Sadler's Wells days such as Cranko's *Pineapple Poll* (Gilbert's story, Sullivan's music and Osbert Lancaster's witty sets), and its varied programmes include *The Lady and the Fool*, another Cranko work, set to music by Verdi, a schmatzy story of a society beauty who befriends two street clowns and takes them with her to a grand ball; a new revival of the historically famous Nijinsky ballet *La Spectre de la Rose* and *The Maids*, based on Jean Genet's vicious tale of perversion and murder. Recently premiered were Ronald Hynd's nostalgic piece of Edwardiana, *In a Summer Garden* and Kenneth MacMillan's *Poltroon*, Pierot's violent revenge on those who have exploited him. Another work commissioned especially for the company is *The Grand Tour*, a camp send-up to music by Noel Coward in which American choreographer Joe Layton assembles an oddly assorted group of literary, theatrical and cinematic personalities from the past upon a cruise ship—Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford, Theda Bara and George Bernard Shaw, Gertrude Lawrence and Coward himself who, when he was presented at a performance at Sadler's Wells, seemed to enjoy the impersonation enormously. The New group is effectively decentralising ballet, which is as it should be. Since its formation theatre-goers outside the capital have had the first look at important new works performed by dancers such as David Wall, Rudolph Nureyev and Lynn Seymour, and in the months ahead Svetlana Beriosova, Donald MacLeary, Desmond Kelly and Merle Park will be among the famous soloists dancing for audiences in the provinces.

People

Chris Mohr;
Avril Fox

Avril Fox is about to enter the third stage of her life, according to the Hindus. With Education and Procreation well out of the way she plans to spend Meditation in a shooting-box in Radnor-

continued on page 33

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It was a Tuesday evening in February. Nine o'clock. Acton Vale. I was waiting for a bus. The road before me was wide, busy and well-lit but at my back was a park, an ocean of darkness behind sturdy municipal railings. I passed the time by stamping my feet and humming tuneless songs to myself until suddenly I became aware of rustling noises and strange groaning sounds coming from just behind the park railings.

I turned round, heart beating, and was treated to a blurred view of white staring eyes, a triangle of naked male flesh and the frantic workings of a pair of pudgy hands. Indecent exposure, they call it. At that moment I could think of plenty of other names.

Of course, I *knew* I was in no danger. I knew the park railings stood between him and me; I saw he was enjoying himself too much in there to come out and leap on me; I knew that in all such cases the possibility of physical attack is remote enough to be discounted. I knew all that—but only in my head. The rest of me was not convinced and my trembling legs carried me thankfully onto the Number 7 bus, from whose lighted safety the incident seemed nothing except laughable.

But then it's always the same. Afterwards you have a funny story to tell your friends and some sympathy for the problems that lead people to haunt dark side-streets and lonely commons. But at the time there is only the shock of surprise, the anger at a visual assault, the edge of fear.

And I speak as a connoisseur. The incident in the park was my third such experience in the space of two weeks. On previous occasions a sad drunken old man, caught in the act of relieving himself against a wall, had turned and waved what appeared to be a flabby extra finger in my direction, while a few days before that a gentleman had classically parted his raincoat at me from a shadowy doorway.

Then, in earlier years, there had been the naked man in the school shrubbery and at college there had been the Fearsome Flasher, whose speciality was to stand in front of lighted windows until someone looked out and then to fling wide his coat to reveal a scrawny torso, naked apart from shoes, socks and a lady's black suspender belt.

Was I, I wondered, getting paranoid about this? Was I looking for it? Was there some-

thing about me that made me flashers' prey? Did I look sweet and innocent, vulnerable and shockable?

No, said friends, not at all, and proceeded to regale me with enough nasty tales to prove that flashing is a popular pastime and the majority of women at some time or another are subject to such experiences. The following two stories, culled from the general selection, illustrate the kind of thing that can, and does, happen.

Rosemary was travelling on a crowded subway in New York, absorbed in catching up on the gossip from an old friend.

Suddenly the friend, who was sitting opposite her, froze, eyes wide with horror, and indicated something at Rosemary's left shoulder. Turning round she found a large pink male member resting on her shoulder and nudging gently into her ear.

Other passengers stared, giggled or turned away. Brushing it off with a gasp of repulsion she leapt off at the next stop and spend the next few days obsessively washing the afflicted part. Less bizarre, but perhaps more frightening, was Sandra's experience. Coming off hospital duty late one night and taking the Northern Line home to Clapham she found herself alone in a carriage with a man who moved to sit opposite her, fiddled with his clothing and awaited her reaction. Slowly, through the layers of tiredness, it dawned on her what was happening and she moved to the doors at the far end of the carriage. He followed her slowly down the central aisle, deliberately displaying his wares for her to see. The train seemed as if it would never stop. He stood close behind her, not touching her but blocking any escape route. At the next stop she fell out of the train, ran up the empty platform and jumped into another compartment just as the doors closed. He tried to follow her but had to jump into another carriage.

At her home stop she fled up the escalator while he tried to catch up with her. Dodging through the back streets she managed to shake him off and arrived home terrified and trembling.

This kind of exhibitionism is a sad act, speaking of inadequacy and impotence. For women it can be frightening, disturbing or simply an irritating nuisance. Yet, despite this, flashing has become a current joke. Private Eye runs a series of Dirty Old Man cartoons (sad, ugly, bemackintoshed D.O.M. stands on a rural height reading the



THINGS THAT GO FLASH IN THE NIGHT

Hilary Wilce exposes exposure

LUCINDA COWELL

notice: 'From Here You Can Flash Over Five Counties'). Monty Python's Flying Circus included a flashing joke in one of their recent programmes and at one London jumble sale some months back an enterprising salesman managed to dispose of a pile of unwanted mens' clothing by making up 'flashing kits', khaki raincoats teamed with cut-off trouser bottoms, designed to be fastened above the knees with elastic bands, which were snapped up with glee by trendy jokers.

But why laugh? 'Well the exhibitor is doing what all men want to do,' says Dr. R.G. Bird, a psychiatrist to the London Magistrates' Courts. 'He is really only doing in public what many men are doing in private. Take the man who reads sex magazines at home. In a way he is exposing himself to the girls in the magazines.'

'But exhibitionism is usually the act of people whose sex life is pretty poor, who have difficulties in making relationships, or less commonly, men who are impotent. It might be that the man is pretty insignificant in real life and is flaunting what he has got because he's not up to much generally.'

'Then there is the more classical view that the man who exposes himself is frightened of losing his penis and by exposing it to women he's saying "Look, I've still got it!", while at the same time tempting the fates, so to speak. Certainly the cases I've known have exhibited, under treatment, the most monstrous fears of the vagina, seeing it full of razor blades or equipped with teeth.'

'There are three things about the act which are significant, I think. There is always *distance* involved, never any physical contact. Also it's a very *childish* act—to display something in order to say "look what I've got that you haven't". And what can be more childish than the man who exposes himself and then runs away?

'Thirdly it's a *safe* act because the man is never tested in any way. He doesn't have to make a relationship with a woman. But then of course it's never satisfying because he never proves anything. He has to do it over and over again.'

'As far as women are concerned you have to distinguish between the expected response and the real response. In fantasy the man wants the woman to fall down in wonder and adoration before his mighty organ although if she did do that he'd probably run a mile.'

'The real response is usually that the woman turns away, or is shocked and upset. Although I don't understand what there is to be frightened of. Such acts are virtually never dangerous. After all, it's very rare for rape to be preceded by the man waving his penis about before he does anything.'

Yet on a dark night when there is no-one around except you and him, it's not easy to stand and deliberate on whether your knocking knees stem from some deep sexual repression, from the results of an unpleasant surprise, or from a straightforward fear of possible danger. But what can be done? And what can be done when the same thing happens, at the same time and in the same place on repeated occasions? Going to the police might be unkind and unnecessary but to some people it seems the only thing to do. Even so, effectual results are rare.

In Liverpool a few years ago, a girl reporter working on the night shift of a newspaper was repeatedly confronted by the same man in the same place on her way to work. When she eventually went to the police she received the distinct impression that, as she had not changed her route to work (the quickest, most obvious way to go), then she must have really wanted to see what he was offering to her gaze.

More attention is likely to be given by the police to cases involving young children but then it seems that little harm is actually done by the act itself; the danger lies in the reactions of over-anxious parents and teachers.

Better treatment for sexual problems is obviously needed if help is to be given to the people who need it. But for the woman who is confronted with the same thing tomorrow or next week there is no solution other than an averted gaze or a quick sprint in the opposite direction. A curled lip and a scornful 'Put it away I've seen bigger and better' might strike at the root of the problem but is perhaps too unkind considering the anxieties that lie behind the act. 'What are you doing that for?' could be the ultimate put-down, the question with no answer, but possibly threatening enough to provoke even the most passive dirty old man to unreasoning anger.

Anyway, these and other smart responses are only for the brave. For the rest of us it's a question of grinning and bearing it—while they carry on grinning and baring it.

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Tanya

organising an exhibition of Bolivian traditional costume. But what did the real girl feel. In her Diary there is a moment of rarely-revealed introversion:

'Do I get nervous? Do I get scared? Why shouldn't I? I believe that one of the great things that gives me a feeling of calmness and security is to keep thinking of the problems that might come up, about the "minor" details, because that way, when the moment of decision arrives everything is much easier. There are times when I feel calm—too calm perhaps. I look at those robots in uniform and feel sorry for them, but at the same time I want to laugh in their faces and say: How stupid can you get? Where is your power? And when I'm in this new circle of people, invested with my new personality, and making them believe I'm one of them, the real hidden me observes everything, and like a newspaper man wearing an invisible cape, I jot everything down. I come across men and women who have begun the struggle. And then, though I cannot speak to them, my heart salutes them and wishes it were with them.'

Death of a Guerilla 1967

Che's basic idea was to use Tania to obtain strategic and tactical information of importance, because of her links with high-ranking politicians. He was opposed to using her in action or on guerilla supply missions, but to keep her in reserve, avoiding any suspicion of her true role. Che had already arrived in Bolivia and set up the first guerilla bases in the mountainous jungle near the little oil-town of Camiri. She was sent to Argentina to contact Regis Debray and a painter Ciro Bustos, and—against orders from Che—she brought them herself to the camp.

Che was very angry. In his Diary, on March 27th, he wrote:

'It is obvious that the deserters or the prisoners talked, but how much they said or how they said it is not exactly known. Everything indicates that Tania has become known, which means that two years of good, patient work have been lost. Their departure (Tania, Debray & Bustos) is becoming very difficult...'

In fact they were never able to leave the column. Debray and Bustos were captured, tried and condemned to 30 years imprisonment in Camiri for their contact with the guerillas. Tania, now her identity as Laura Bauer had been connected with Che, had to stay with the guerilla band—something she had always longed for.

One of the comrades, known as Pombo, also kept a detailed diary of the campaign, and he described her adjustment to guerilla life:

'Tania ran into some difficulties with her equipment: her boots, which belonged to the comrades there, were anything but ideal. They were too big and this caused her to have trouble with her feet for some time.'

'The first thing she did was sew for the comrades and take care of a whole series of other problems with buttons and things like that. She also took charge of collecting information, she started the development of what we call information analysis. Moreover she was a big help in the distribution and control of food.'

'She was a person of great physical resistance. While she wasn't used to our long treks, she managed to take them in her stride and always refused any special treatment for being a woman. She wanted to be treated just like the rest of the comrades in the guerilla group.'

'One of the greatest moments for her must have been when Che gave her the honour of being considered as one more fighter and gave her an M-1 rifle.'

Despite her courage, Tania's strength failed under the bitter strains of mobility in that bleak countryside. She went down with fever until she was so weak that Che had to instruct her to stay with the rearguard of the guerillas, led by Joaquin. The two columns were never to reunite.

The most vivid description of Tania's death comes from the man who was then working with the CIA, the then Minister of the Interior, the extraordinary Bolivian Antonio Arguedas who later fled to Cuba with Che's Dairies, denouncing the vast network of CIA activities in Bolivia.

'When Tania entered the water, coming out of the underbrush, the soldiers in hiding got their first glimpse of the woman with the imperative voice with which they were already familiar. This blonde woman, thin from the privations of the struggle, seemed very beautiful to them. She was wearing camouflage battle trousers, boots, a faded blouse with green and white stripes, a knapsack and a machine gun. The first shot from those in ambush were heard. Tania raised her arms to bring her weapon into the firing position; it is not known whether she was able to fire or not. Vargas, a soldier, shot her through the lung, and Tania fell into the water, together with the Preuvian doctor 'Negro'. When he saw that Tania had been wounded, Negro tried to save her and let himself be carried by the current. He reached the shore and pulled her out with him. On seeing that she was dead, he took to the jungle, where the dogs tracked him down. The soldiers continued the search for Tania and found her body and knapsack seven days later, on the shore...'



Extracts from 'TANIA',
by Marta Rojas and Mirta Rodriguez Claderon,
published by Ocean Books in March 1973, 35p.

GREAT DIVIDE

either homosexual or heterosexual men. But though many contributed stories about communal adolescent masturbation experiences none of them had actually participated in an adult homosexual encounter.

Few of them, in fact, even have friendships with men in their groups outside the group. One man put it this way—'Once a man's made a sexual gesture towards another man, he's had it. He's branded "queer" and he's then treated by men and women as though he were queer, irrevocably and exclusively. This doesn't happen to women. Just because a woman's been to bed with another woman doesn't mean that she'll never want to sleep with a guy again.' Or so they hope. Some got far enough to admit that they did find a few men sexually attractive. One man even confessed that the women he found attractive were those who had been to bed with men who turned him on.

A practicing homosexual joined one group and suggested at a meeting that they get on the floor and hug one another. A man sitting in a chair peeling an apple suddenly cut his thumb. Everyone noticed this and, desperately needing some comic relief to cut the tension, all simultaneously burst into laughter. Similar suggestions in other groups have met with similar responses. Humour and low comedy can always be relied upon to detoxify the atmosphere when it becomes too charged. So, as of this writing, men have made little progress in removing the stigma that attaches to touching other male bodies. So what has resulted so far from all this talk? I didn't meet a single man who regretted joining this kind of group. One man came from a group that started with seven married men and ended nine months (!) later with none. Another group disbanded over allegedly 'irreconcilable political differences'. One man claimed that he had learned how to be as open with his wife as he had always been with his children. Several others claimed that they could no longer relate to women who passively submitted to the machismo they were trying to get rid of. Another became much more pessimistic about the possibility of men and women ever having healthy relations—'It'll take at least a thousand years. That's not going to help me much.'

Is there hope for these groups? Your answer will depend on where you stand within the feminist movement. If you believe that the true liberation of women cannot be achieved without world-wide political and social revolution, then you may not see these groups as being of primary political significance. At the other extreme, if you have accepted the utter failure of the male principle in all its manifestations, then the very idea of a male consciousness-raising group will seem ludicrous and irrelevant. But if you find yourself somewhere between these two poles (the majority of feminists do) then you may accept the idea of men exploring their sexual and interpersonal politics as the first significant gesture towards honest and freely-given cooperation between the sexes. At the moment there seem to be no better options.

REVIEWS

shire, writing her second book, and looking after a wild-life sanctuary. The taste for books and butterflies was largely acquired during a happy but poverty-stricken childhood in the Cotswolds. She was dropped as a baby and suffered from severe epilepsy, which ruled out normal schooling. 'I had an extraordinarily polyglot education, reading everything I could lay my hands on: Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and all the Greek myths—people think I had a classical education.' When it came to thinking about work she trained as a shorthand-typist, and loathes office work to this day. 'I married very early because there wasn't very much else to do.' Her husband ran off to join the French foreign legion after some shady business dealings.—'I'd been reading Beau Geste to him at the time—I always dig my own pits', and she was left with a four-month old baby, unable to start divorce proceedings because a wife has no legal existence of her own and is domiciled wherever her husband is. Then war broke out, and by the time the legionnaire returned, Avril had become a Communist—'the logical kind. I went to a Moseley meeting. I went to a Stafford Cripps meeting and they had an unknown man who stammered who nobody had heard of at all, called Aneurin Bevan. I listened to the Conservatives; and I decided the only ones who seemed to be sensible were the Communists.' With her second husband, a leading Communist, she was sent out to Romania to edit the English version of an international magazine. 'I'm still home-sick for Romania—it's like walking back into a fairy-tale of Andrew Lang'. When the magazine closed she worked for Romanian radio and then as editor for the Foreign Languages Publishing house. 'I was always critical—a sort of rebel within the cause', and her unorthodox attitudes (she got herself smuggled into a secret trial) made her unpopular enough to ship back to England. It was also the end of her marriage ('I realised Communists are just as puritanical as any other section of the community, if not more'), but not the end of all political activity. Until moving out of Harlow New Town recently (she went there with her two sons and two foster sons because it was about the only place a woman with children could get furnished accommodation) she was a controversial figure on the Council. 'I raised the question that there should be more women in Urban District Councils and the gentlemen in the chair patronisingly said to me—'Well, how many do you think there should be?', and

I said—'Well, there should be half and half'—and an astounded gasp and roar of laughter went up.' 'I feel passionately that there should be far more women at the top. Women are much more mature than men because they're forced by life to look at themselves in a more mature fashion. If every man had to menstruate and have children, men would be more mature, because these things take you by the scruff of the neck.' She sees politics as only a symptom of the real trouble: the difficulty in present society of achieving maturity. 'Maturity is at least a recognition of the need to examine one's own motivation objectively. I wonder how often Edward Heath does that, and he's typical of practically every politician in the world'. She admires King Hussein of Jordan, and cites Indira Gandhi, and to a lesser extent, Golda Meir as mature public figures. 'The great disease of mankind—and I use the word advisedly—is the retreat into theory, losing commonsense and one's roots in the ground.' If there is any one factor to blame, it's the prevailing religious tradition: Christianity—that sterile male trinity—is life hating—a denigration of the flesh and a raising of anything which is regarded as being intellectual. And as soon as you denigrate the flesh you denigrate women. Whenever imperialism flourished, sex and women were undervalued. We have to recognise the feminine, appreciate it and exalt it'.

You could suspect her of having not only a classical, but also a thorough academic background. She draws freely on anthropological references, illustrating her point about the interdependence of the sexes with a quarrel-healing ritual practised by Bushmen: 'All the women dream a dream, and they all dream the same dream. And when they have dreamt their dream, they come out, and they sing their dream. And then the men dance to the dream, and this dance sends the men into an ecstasy, and in this state they lay their hands on those who are quarrelling. And in all this the women's singing is essential and the men's dancing is essential, and out of it comes the



Avril Fox
photo by Peter Stark

solution'. She refutes with impatience any accusation that her theories are mystic or irrelevant to the exigencies of everyday life, and insists 'We have to learn all over again certain knowledge which was taken for granted by primitive man'. Orgies, mass festivals, celebrations of life and fertility are all coming back in the guise of pop festivals, football matches, which indicates that people still have a deep primitive need to come together in this way. She even criticises witchcraft on purely practical grounds: 'It's a healthy little religion, which did do some good, but I stopped being a witch because it's too backward looking', and her commonsense extends to a current involvement with the supernatural: 'I don't believe anything is unexplainable'. She describes with great enthusiasm how experiments in photographing people's auras reveal that the centres of the auras correspond to Chinese acupuncture centres. It is rather hard to press charges of mysticism; and for someone who also tends to compartmentalise her life chronologically and laterally ('there's part of me which is sexology, part is religion, part nature-lover, part politics'), she's a remarkably consistent personality, both publicly and privately. Founder of the Cosmo anti-censorship group (the answer to Mrs. Whitehouse's Clean-Up TV Campaign), which amalgamated with John Calder and Marion Boyars' Defence of the Arts and Literature Society, Avril worked on two major obscenity trials, obtaining defence witness for *The Last Exit to Brooklyn* and *The Little Red Schoolbook* cases. She was Information Officer and Counsellor for the Albany Trust. Last year she brought out her first book, *The Emerging Ethic** in a limited signed first edition of 600. 'I had terrible trouble getting it published—it doesn't fit into anyone's lists, it's in a weird category of its own. But Iris Murdoch liked it, and that's good enough for me'. Her consistency and lack of compromise owe much to her attitude towards living. She prefers to follow a guiding instinct—'A door opens and you go through it without necessarily knowing where it's leading you'—rather than blindly pursuing objectives. Twice married, she now thinks marriage is nonsense. 'The person you want to have children with isn't necessarily the person you're going to want to spend your old age with—you might prefer to travel with a companion of your own sex. I look back over my lovers, and the one who was exactly right 25 years ago would be a dead bore now'. Her eldest son runs a financial counselling service—the first of its kind; her younger son is a painter. She's very proud of both,

but is now extremely glad to be alone. 'There's not really enough time living alone, I find. As you get older, it's much nicer.' Perhaps it's her unique blend of spiritually and pragmatism which makes you believe her. **The Emerging Ethic* is available (Price £1.20 + 10p postage) from Dr. Douglas M.C. MacEwan (Volutna Press) Wellington House, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire AB4 7JH.

Books

Carol Dix:
Take A Pill
John Robson, 15p from
Marxists in Medicine,
27 Pearman Street, London
SE1.

In the good old, bad old days, when corruption was really corrupt and no-one mentioned it, the industries manufacturing and selling drugs (pharmaceutical) used to buy golf balls for doctors and pay for their time on the green. Nowadays, things being more hypocritical, doctors are taken by other kinds of balls and are squeezed to a mere cowardly whimper. Just how much control of our lives—in sickness or in health—does the drug industry manage to exercise? From John Robson's excellent pamphlet, you will realise, a lot. 'Take a Pill' is an examination of just who the drug industry is out to help—the patient or the profit maker. It's a good investigative report—which by being printed through an underground group is able to name names and print figures, and show how many glaring injustices there are between the prescription and you. The drug industry is owned by several monopolies. It's an easy industry for this because the companies get up to 20 years patent on a

product, to take account of their losses incurred in research and development. So—you get situations like that over Tetracycline—the well-known antibiotic—which was patented by Pfizer in '55 and sold to the NHS at £65 per 1000 tablets—the actual cost of production was £5 per 1000. After a report and investigation, competitive prices were introduced and they now sell for £15 per 1000.

Then there are the brand names. As John Robson says, it's as if beans' manufacturers began to compete on the name of the original product—calling them HiPros or LoCals, or anagrammed the word to *sneabs* or *nabes*. There are 3,000 brand names of drugs—mostly competing within the same company over their sales.

Companies spend more on advertising and training of reps. to sell the product to doctors than they do on research. And in medical schools pharmaceutical training for young doctors is as little as 10 hours in the whole course. Yet we are still expecting a doctor to be aware and in control of this situation.

For his final word on profits, John Robson quotes the Chairman of Beechams who wrote in his group's annual report for last year: 'Naturally enough for a company the size of Beechams, the year brought it's problems. The pharmaceutical side of the business including proprietary medicines, was clearly not helped by the very low level of winter sickness throughout the Northern hemisphere.'

The argument of the pamphlet is, initially, for nationalisation to mend a few of the wrongs—particularly to control the £30 million profit made from the NHS by the industry. But that will only be the beginning. The abuses caused by the drug industry have already led to the 'take a pill' syndrome for blotting out social ills.

Take the huge company LaRoche (part of the American giant Hoffman LaRoche, turnover £500 million; profit £84 million). They are the producers of Librium and Valium. Anybody who has been to the doctor for some undefinable disease will be aware of how quick they to push them. LaRoche sell 300 million tablets a year. An advert of their's for another anti-depressant, tranquilizer called Limbitriol reads, 'relieves the depression behind her anxiety'. Aimed at the woman patient, it shows a picture of mother and family in slum like conditions and has this blurb:

Over-crowded environment
—lack of space, lack of privacy, breeds unhappy people. But while society can offer little in the material sense, help is forthcoming where the effects of bad conditions can be measured in human

distress.

'Victims of overcrowding are familiar anxious faces in some surgeries. Yet their presence is often prompted by insomnia, rash, headache, or other presenting symptoms rather than their cause, anxiety or depression. The anxiety depression syndrome responds well to Limbitriol, swift anxiolytic action preceding gradual but sure elevation of mood.' Can Brave New World be far behind?



Sally Alexander:
Women, Resistance and Revolution
Sheila Rowbotham
Allen Lane £2.95

In her introduction Sheila Rowbotham explains her purpose—'To trace the fortunes of an idea, that the liberation of women necessitates the liberation of all human beings.' The book describes the developing relationship between feminism and revolutionary socialism. It examines the examples of Russia, China, France, England and America in the period up to the 1920s, and then looks at the lives of women in countries where socialist revolution has occurred, or where women have been active in the battle against imperialism Cuba, Vietnam and Algeria.

Sheila dates the origins of feminism from 17th century puritan England, when the revolution, its emphasis on individual responsibility, and religious and civil rights had stimulated the demand for women's emancipation. Radical, rational and mystical manifestations of feminism appeared in 18th century France and England. But the experience of women in the period before industrial capitalism was not uniform, Sheila argues, and there was little awareness of women's discontent as a political problem.

The 'impudent lasses' who questioned the authority of God, king, priest, husband or father, based their request for equality on ethical grounds of reason and justice. Mary Wollstonecraft, inspired by the ideas of liberty and equality in the French revolution was the most eloquent representative of this type of traditional feminism. She was the first woman to speak for her whole sex, and this is where her originality lies. But she did not question class society. And although she

blamed most of the feminine follies on male tyranny, she could not conceive of women struggling for their own emancipation without men.

Industrialisation and the politics of the French revolution provided the essential pre-conditions for the emergence of a revolutionary feminist movement. Industrialisation widened the gulf between the classes, and this exacerbated social tension. Women as a group were only peripheral to production, they were confined to its low-paid casual sectors. Women's work outside the home had been deteriorating in skill and status since the 16th century because of industrial re-organisation, and their exclusion from male dominated guilds. In the 19th century, the balance of power within the family altered; men became the principal breadwinners, and industry was moved from the home to the factory. Women became fully responsible for all domestic work and the rearing of children, although most of them were still forced through economic necessity to work for a wage as well. While the majority of women were working harder for less reward, the wives and daughters of the aspiring middle classes were subjected to a life of trivia and tedium. These women were deprived of education and occupation and bourgeois ideology sanctified their passive role.

From the experience of these two classes of women two types of feminism developed in the 19th century. Upper class women demanded access to education and professional employment on equal terms with men. These women Sheila describes as the bourgeois, or equal rights feminists. But she is not primarily concerned with this group.

In fact she loses interest in the bourgeois feminists after Mary Wollstonecraft. What she is looking for is the first tentative realisation that women are going to need

more than men's goodwill and their own personal struggles to achieve liberation. For Capitalism cannot adapt itself step by step to women's demands—Women's liberation requires a radical restructuring of society. Sheila focuses primarily on revolutionary socialism therefore, and because of this, the image of feminism in the book is sometimes blurred. The bourgeois feminists are dismissed because they sought accommodation with the status quo. Limitations of time and space might make this a forgivable omission, except that it was after all the bourgeois feminists who were the first to recognise the women question as a radical issue in itself. In this sense at least they were revolutionary.

The mainstream of bourgeois feminism did flounder. In America it was sacrificed to the political priorities of the civil war and the abolition movement. In England it was suffocated by the first world war. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony's separatism was perhaps a desperate move, but it must have seemed the only option open to women who were angry at being persistently fobbed off. It is a false option, Sheila argues, because it bears no relation to the reality of life as most women live it. The distinction must be made between an independent women's movement, and an isolationist one, otherwise it can result in the ambiguous situation the American feminists found themselves in—supporting blacklegs because they were women. Women, in common with other oppressed groups, will only become effective as a political movement when they realise that they are 'pitted against a total oppressive system rather than just the indignity that is done to them through the subordination of their own kind.'

A socialist feminism did emerge in the 19th century. It was stimulated and in-

fluenced by the nascent labour movement, the development of the social sciences and a strong bourgeois feminist movement. There was also exchange of ideas and experience between women in France, England and America. The vital impetus, however, came from the inter-action between the ideas of the radical and socialist thinkers, whose thoughts had been moulded by the French revolution, and the political activities of women themselves.

Diverse intellectual threads contributed to a feminist social analysis. The romantics, for instance, repelled by the 'alienation' effects of the factory system, inhuman conditions in the new towns, advocated unfettered personal relations between men and women. The arrival of contraceptives confirmed the connection between female independence and sexual liberation—an issue which has been a bone of contention between puritans and libertarians within the movement ever since, as well as a focus for masculine fears and disapproval. William Thompson, the radical economist recognised that women's lib, could not be contained within capitalism. He described home as the 'prison-house' of the wife, and women's sex, their indelible mark of inferiority, like the black skin. The utopian socialists also linked the position of women with a wider critique of capitalism. The Owenite co-op communities, the Fourier's phalansteries socialised housework and childcare, thus establishing in practice a relationship between the liberation of women and alternative life-style.

By the 1840's then, the women question was closely associated in the popular imagination with revolutionary socialism ideas. But the utopian socialists had been able to do no more than moralise about women's subordination. Their ideas existed in a vacuum. Until Marx and Engels there was no understanding of the dynamics of capitalist society, nor of the determining factors of historical/social change.

Sheila devotes a chapter to Marx and Engels. They examined the structure of the capitalist mode of production, and recognise the revolutionary potential of the working class as the agency of social change. Marx followed Fourier in seeing the relations between men and women as the means by which the whole level of human development can be assessed. But in his schema women were tangential to the working class struggle. Women's liberation was to be part of communist society, but Marx's writings how this would come about, or whether indeed, a change in the mode of production, would necessarily involve the liberation of women. Engels



Sheila Rowbotham photo by Mike Hill

in the *Origin of the family*, (1884) on the other hand definitely related changes in the family, to changes in the mode of production. He stressed the need to examine the relations of reproduction as well as the relations of production, as a determining factor of historical change. However, later Marxists have tended to dismiss this question.

They have concentrated on organising women at their place of work, ignored the importance of the family as a means of socialisation and distribution of sexual roles. The revolutionary left's traditional solution to women's alleged lack of political involvement has been to encourage them into production. This, however, only imposes the most intolerable double oppression on women. The women's movement to-day is trying to find a different strategy of liberation, although also based on a materialist theory of history. Sadly the aspirations of ordinary women have seldom been recorded. This had tended to make women believe that they have no history apart from that of their husbands or sons. In the chapter, 'Bread and Roses' Sheila goes a long way towards dispelling this myth. Sheila described the experience of some of the women who bravely flouted convention in the attempt to live by their principals: Flora Tristan, the French revolutionary, who felt that the whole world was against her; Eleanor Marx who argued that 'women are the creatures of an organised tyranny of men'; Olive Schreiner, Emma Goldman, and Alexandra Kollantai all of whom suffered not only for their revolutionary work but also their feminist beliefs.

She quotes folk songs which reflect women's frustration at their lack of freedom, and sexual oppression; she describes the women who formed their own clubs in the French rev. of 1789, and 1848 and during the Paris Commune in 1871; she tells how women trades unionists and chartists organised separately from the men; how the match girls strike sparked off the wave of industrial militancy in England in the 1880's and early 90's. But the feminism that Sheila is describing was usually a reaction to localised rebuffs from men. Women were forced into organising separately because they wanted the opportunity, then as now, to express their ideas and opinions freely without the intimidating presence of men. All women will empathise with Adelheid Popp the German social democrat, who felt compelled to speak in defence of her sex at her very first political meeting. As she raised her hand, and before she could open her mouth, there were cries of 'bravo' from the male audience. What was lacking in these

various manifestations of women's political activity in the 19th century was any form of systematic analysis of male domination. Because she underplays the importance of this absence, and gives too vague a definition of feminism, Sheila's evocations from this period sometimes appear random. We are given an exciting series of cameos, but insufficient criteria to evaluate their importance. They are removed from the actual historical context in which they took place. The history of feminism in the western countries ends with the Russian revolution, and presumably will be continued in Sheila's next book about 'consciousness and the position of women in modern capitalism.' Women, Resistance and Revolution then moves on to look at women under socialism. These accounts show that even formal equality is unlikely before a socialist revolution. But equally they pose the question of whether a socialist revolution can be complete without a strong, independent women's liberation movement.

Two years ago so many issues in the women's movement were posed as if Marxism and feminism were exclusive alternatives. Sheila shows, however that the greatest tradition in the women's movement combined both.

Sally Alexander is a member of the Women's Liberation workshop, was active on the night cleaners campaign, wrote a pamphlet on the St. Giles Fair for the Ruskin History workshop and she has a 7 year old daughter.

Roland Gant: *The Forging of a Rebel* (Davis-Poynter, £5.00),

Arturo Barea dedicated *The Forging of a Rebel* one of the greatest autobiographical works of this century, to 'Two Women, my mother, the Señora Leonor and my wife, Ilsa.'

The Forge, the first volume of this trilogy, now available in this country for the first time in one volume describes Arturo's childhood in the slums of Madrid before World War I.

His mother was a widow washerwoman and Arturo's portrait of her is drawn with love and admiration, 'my mother was a very small woman, rather plump with quick movements. Her skin was very fair, her eyes gray like a cat's, and her brown hair had only a few white strands on the temples; she did not look her fifty-odd years.'

He also described his visits to relations in the country. They were peasants and with them he found a broader meaning to life than in the grinding poverty of Madrid. 'My Uncle Luis (a blacksmith) belonged to a race of men which has almost disappeared; he was a crafts-

man and a gentleman. He was so deeply in love with his craft that to him the iron was something alive and human. At time he talked to it.'

In his second book, *The Track*, Arturo wrote of his military service in Spanish Morocco. He showed how bestial both sides were in the Riff war and how brave and stupid (and inspiring) the senior officers were. During that campaign it became plain that many Army officers would rise against the Government and that they were as much concerned to get a revolt under way as they were to crush Abd-el-Krim. The King, Alfonso XIII, fell but immediately after the establishment of a republic the same generals started to plot the overthrow of what they thought of as a Red dictatorship. The reasons for a revolt that was to become the Civil war are clearly and brilliantly stated.

The Clash, the concluding volume, is about the Civil War itself. In that confused struggle Barea was loyal to the Republic and became 'the Unknown Voice of Madrid' on radio and was the head of the Foreign Press and Censorship Bureau for the Government.

In November 1936, snatching what sleep he could on a camp bed in the Telefonica building in Madrid, Arturo had, as part of his job, to check a group of foreign journalists. It was midnight and there was an air raid. One of the journalists was a woman—a round face with big eyes, blunt nose, wide forehead, a mass of dark hair that looked almost black. She was over thirty and no beauty. Why in hell had those people in Valencia sent me a woman, when I had my hands full with the men anyway? My feelings towards her were strictly unfriendly. The following day, she spoke frankly about herself, ignoring, or not even noticing, my resentment. She was an Austrian Socialist with eighteen years of political work behind her; she had had her share in the February Rising of the Viennese workers in 1934, and in the underground movement following it; then she had escaped to Czechoslovakia and had lived there with her husband, working as a political writer. She had decided to go to Spain as soon as the Civil War broke out. Why? Well, she thought it was the most important thing in the whole world for Socialists, and she wanted to do something for it.'

By University training an economist and sociologist, a brilliant linguist by instinct Ilsa (as she then was, the 'a' ending was a later and touching Iberianisation of her name) joined the censorship office with Arturo to read the dispatches in those languages he did not know. Her marriage had gone awry, Arturo's marriage and a love affair had gone sour. They became lovers. 'I had not the

feeling of having known a woman for the first time, but of having known her always; "always", not in the course of my life, but in the absolute sense, before and outside this life of mine.'

When the Republic collapsed and Franco was undisputed (militarily) victor, they left for France. There they lived in poverty (helped by unexpected aid from humble French people who supported the Republic), and Arturo talked to Ilsa about his Madrid childhood and wrote *La Forja*.

Then they came to England and it was then, in country cottages, that a remarkable collaboration began. Ilsa, Austrian in nationality and upbringing, translated Arturo's books and articles from Spanish into English. *The Forge* was originally translated by Sir Peter Chalmers-Mitchell, published by Faber and was widely reviewed and praised, and then became a Readers' Union Choice. Ilsa, closer to Arturo than any other translator could have been, later retranslated *The Forge* and translated, *The Track*, *The Clash*, *Lorca: the Poet and his People*, his novel *The Broken Root* and a book on the Spanish philosopher Unamuno.

How did they live, this lean and hawk-nosed Spaniard and his plump Austrian wife? Arturo broadcast every week in the South American Spanish language service of the BBC. On Fridays he was always to be found in The Majorca, a Spanish restaurant in Brewer Street, his contact with other Spanish exiles. Ilsa and Arturo lived in the West Country (or on the fringes of it), and finally, until Arturo's death in 1957, at Middle Lodge on Lord Faringdon's estate at Buscote.

Arturo had a boyish sense of humour and rocked with near-silent chuckles at anything that amused him. His English always remained very fractured ('I saw a man with a b---d in the train' could have been a man with a bud, bird, beard etc. but, on questioning, he would turn it into whatever he felt like at the time). He was, however, a man of moods on whom depression could sit like a raven. Ilsa, attuned to his state of mind through love, devotion and intelligence, often pretended to deliberately misunderstand what he had said and spark off some bizarre and fantastic invention which, in the telling, dispelled his melancholy, as well as diverting his listeners. She, in a quite different way, could be immense fun. Her remarkable erudition, her fluency in many languages, her constant curiosity about people, events, the arts, was matched by an ability to see the ridiculous and fall into uncontrollable giggles at her own and others' expense. Asking me if I liked something she had bought for herself—a shirt or blouse—she said 'I was such a busy

political animal when I was young that I had no time for clothes and now that I'm in middle age coquettishness keeps breaking out and I enjoy it enormously.

Arturo became the best-known clock-repairer in three countries, charming outside ladies into parting with their large corsets from which he took steel to make clock-springs, and Ilsa became a skilled gardener, botanist and angler. I spent three weekends there when Ilsa was in Austria and Arturo in South America and never took even a roach from Gavin Faringdon's lake. Ilsa returned and stood for five minutes on the shore, cigarette in the corner of her mouth, and landed the largest pike I have ever seen. We stuffed it with anchovies and butter and herbs from her garden and dined splendidly.

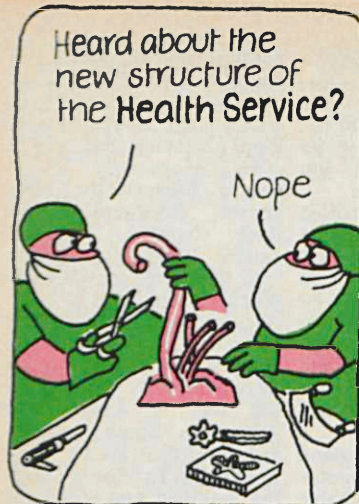
Although Arturo was a born writer his chances of success in this country would have been slight without Ilsa's constant intellectual stimulation and her impeccable translation of his work. She was so much more than that, however. She was wife, inspiration, business manager, solace, publicist—everything to him and for him. There is no doubt that her single-minded devotion to his work over some twenty selfless and frequently difficult years kept her away from her own work.

And Ilsa in her own right? In her youth she published poetry and a novel and later translated twenty or more books into English from various languages as well as lecturing and broadcasting in several languages. In 1966 her long, thorough and fascinating portrait *Vienna: Legend and Reality* was published. She dedicated it to the memory of her parents 'Dr Valentin Pollak and Alice von Zieglmayer'—both of whom I had known when they lived with the Bareas at Buscote, and this renewed contact with Vienna, through writing about the city, was followed by her return there.

Ilsa was welcomed by her native city with a practical recompense in the form of a flat and a pension for her work many years before for the Socialist movement. She often talked gaily and amusingly about having seen the inside of prisons in most of the Eastern European countries, about her friendship with leaders of the Left such as the Bulgarian Dimitrov and of having been on the run in many countries because of her political activities.

Ilsa died in Vienna on 1 January 1973. Brilliant, stimulating, an important figure in European politics between the wars, she was also the fire that forged Arturo Barea's great book about Spain into a classic in English.

Roland Gant has written novels poetry and non-fiction, and is an editorial director of Heinemann



NEEDLES IN THE NATIONAL HEALTH

By Carol Dix.

How far will the proposed restructuring of the National Health Service effect us? One organisation is trying to ensure that, whatever happens, we won't get a worse deal.

Hospitals are not the easiest places to stir up political activity—but activity there is, and it's growing. At the time of writing, the two main unions for hospital workers, NUPE and COHSE are balloting their 220,000 members on the question of coming out on strike over their £4 a week pay claim, which has of course been frozen.

Hospital ancillary workers—and that includes all non professionals, porters, technicians, lab. assistants, laundry men and women, cooks, orderlies and technicians—are among the lowest paid in the country. A NUPE official said, 'We can easily show how consultants earning thousands of pounds a year are completely dependent on humble people earning £17.48 a week.'

Whether the strike happens or not [in late Feb] militant awareness is growing in the health service. But they have terrible obstacles to face. Foremost is the fact that the majority of workers are women; in a traditional role of caring and in service. The whole hospital set-up still bears the

indelible mark of its nineteenth century beginnings. The hierarchy is so strict.

Hospital workers are fragmented to start with by their nine different unions (including T&GWU; N&GWU; NUPE; ASTMS; NPU; COHSE; and JHDA). What's more the hierarchical structure keeps them apart. Separate staff dining rooms for different classes of workers means the man in the brown coat and the man in the white never meet. Never mind the woman in the starched pinny.

NUPE reckons it has more women members than any other union. But not one woman is a union official.

The first major strike in the history of the NHS took place in Bristol and Gloucestershire in September last year. In London shop stewards from over 50 hospitals have formed LASH (London Alliance of Stewards for Health Workers—in Manchester it's MASH, and in Sheffield SASH) and they produce a news-sheet called Backlash to get information on union action about. There were 24 hour strikes and half day stoppages all over the country on Dec 13, and on January 20, this year, a large conference was held in London to get people from all sides of the health service together, and exchange ideas.

The conference was organised by the editorial collective of 'Needle'—the radical magazine for all health workers which started three years ago after a similar conference in Cambridge and the need was realised. Needle is perhaps most responsible for the growing shift in ideas within hospitals (social workers bring out Case Con; and psychologists, Humpty Dumpty and Red Rat). The conference was held to talk about the pay claim and a lot more.

Needle aims to fight for a socialist health service—that means that all medical care should be free at the time of use; that private practice should be abolished; that the proposed re-organisation of the health service should be stopped as it will only strengthen the centralised bureaucratic machine; and that instead, the health service should come to the local level, being democratically run by local representatives, with a big public health education scheme, as for example in the community health care found in a run-down district of Montreal. The people behind Needle are closely allied to the group, Marxists in Medicine. Their magazine is strongly political, well produced and illustrated with cartoons by RCA students; and is quite an eye-opener for the ordinary un-thinking hypochondriac who is content to trot along to the surgery and feel grateful for his or her (nearly-free) medicines.

Question: is the health service really a working class victory, gouged out of capitalism? Or a capitalist plot to keep the workers fit and that alone? Don't answer immediately. The health service came into being under Labour's auspices, but why has there been an expansion in the private sector, a cut down in spending on new buildings, comparatively little money spent on non-producers in society—the old, chronic sick, mentally or physically handicapped?

This is how Needle sees our health service—the sick man of a decaying society.

The NHS was set up in 1948 and was regarded as a great step forward for the working classes. But, 85% of its resources comes from our taxation. So how much of it really comes from the capitalists for whom we are being kept well to feed?

The Tories don't need to hivy it off—it's a successful tool for maintaining class peace and regulating the economy. We are all pumped with the idea that we are getting something for nothing.

But look, for example, at just who is feeding off the NHS. (i) Private practice. There has been a great leap forward in the number of private insurance schemes—the number has doubled since '61 and now stands at nearly 4% of the population. It's argued that they pay for their stay and treatment—but who pays for the building of the hospitals, but the taxpayer of course. (ii) The drug industry made £30 millions profit in one year off the NHS. All our nearly-free prescriptions are putting more money into pockets of the big monopolies that produce the drugs.

The increase in militancy, says Needle, reflects the growing awareness of the way the NHS is being manipulated to the detriment of both patient and health worker. The whole question of re-organisation for example was discussed at the conference, but with little hope. It is already happily going through parliament with little outside interest, and should be ready to go to the country in April '74. The proposals have been described as 'bureaucratic'—we won't notice it much, it just means a hardening of the health service's already alienating approach. No new ideas

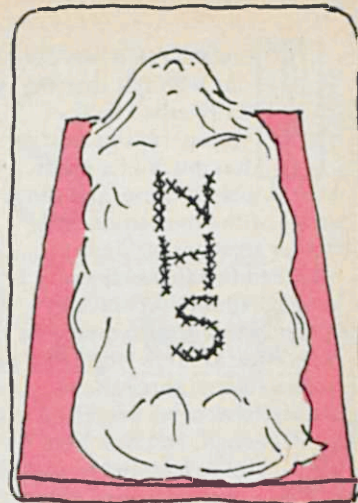
Local services will be run by a **District Management Team**—appointed by the Areas—but most **Health workers** will be excluded



The patient will be represented by **Community Health Councils**—but these haven't any funds and are appointed by the **Regional Health Authority**



This Government aims "at a stroke" to consolidate the **worst** features of the **N.H.S.**



Cartoons by Posy

and attitudes will have a chance.

The worst part is, that the Government recruited the American management consultants McKinsey & Co, and industrial psychologists from Brunel University to draw up the plans, in an attempt to ape the 'efficiency methods' of the profit-oriented business. When asked, for example, whether they would consult patients about nurses' job descriptions, a Brunel psychologist replied, that when they worked with Glacier Metal Co. they didn't ask the ball-bearings what they thought about the supervisors.

Even so, strikes as they stand now are always about pay, related to conditions, and any mention of strikes within hospitals has most people up in arms, especially if they are down in bed—knocks the stuffing out of most Lefty-ideas. Public opinion is always strongly against what they see as irresponsibility.

In Quebec, last May, a general strike included the hospitals, and from the first day the papers carried emotional stories against those workers. Part of the trouble has been the hospital workers themselves, who still see themselves in a service role—not as workers. But then that's part of the carefully imposed structure.

Back in the nineteenth century, when doctors were first setting up, they didn't know very much but wanted the fees, so they surrounded themselves with mystifying language, to keep all their knowledge to themselves, and hence got hold of power. Now, people are so

far from controlling the health of their own bodies, that 40% don't know where their heart is and 95% don't know where their kidneys are.

A cartoon in one issue of *Needle* has a school report saying, 'It says you're lazy, callous, arrogant, brutish, insensitive and obsessed with money and status and thinks you'll make a good doctor.' Of course, admissions to medical schools are still run on the elitist-old boy network and on a 12-1 against basis as far as girls are concerned. Men are doctors; women are nurses.

Courses for doctors are too factually oriented. Very little time is given to community health care, to drug administration and to psychology. A common year in medicine for all those training within the health service is a suggested improvement. Already, alternative lectures are being given by students at Cambridge and have been for three years.

But the real hierarchy of hospitals comes in the role-playing. Doctors get the cake, because of the glamour of the set-up. They love it all and play right up to it. We all believe the Doctor is God and happily put ourselves into his white and sensitive hands. 'The doctor is an actor, he needs lights, props, clothes, make-up. But we have to remember part of the reason why they get away with it is we let them.'—quote from a theatre technician.

Is this the description of a socialist health service? Striking for more pay is one thing and will show the rest of the community that health service workers won't be the downstairs worker, while we all take

tea upstairs. More than that, the health service needs freeing of its nineteenth century yoke and the inequalities within need ironing out.

We should be demanding education. Look, for instance, at the *Medicine for the People* handbooks, published in Canada 'to provide men and women with the information they need to control their own bodies'. You can get hold of one on VD and one on Birth Control—the latter explains how to do the lot, your own 'internal' or, with a friend, using a speculum to see what's going on. (*Birth Control Handbook*, PO Box 1000, Station G, Montreal 130, Quebec. Single copies free, send 25c for mailing.)

Women spend a lot of time in and around hospitals, doctors, clinics and surgeries. A depressing thought, but it shouldn't be. At the conference in January a shop steward from Sheffield described how two women had come along to a union meeting, but had been forbidden to go to any more by their husbands. They had been to more since. If hospitals really are one of the last outposts of women being caught in the trap that they are best suited to serve and administer comfort, then things seem to be changing even there.

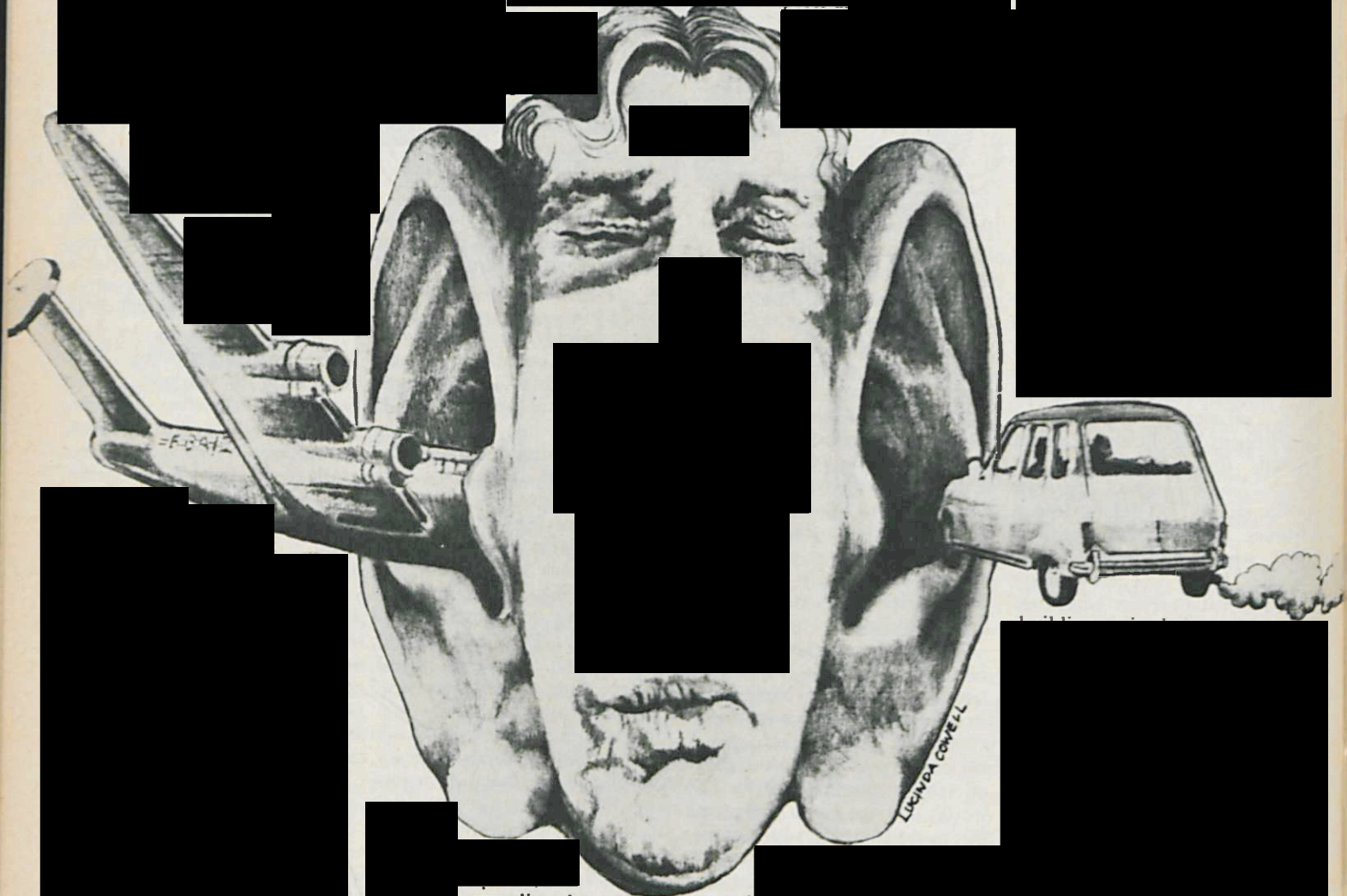
One good example of local action recently has been from

the Hackney Women's Liberation group who brought out a newsletter on Hackney women and their conflict with the local hospitals and doctors. They see themselves as working class wives producing the next generation of workers: 'Either we resign ourselves to being baby factories for the boss class, controlled by its need for a work force or we fight together for our own needs as women for the conditions in which we want to have children and see them grow up.'

Maggie, Marian and Christine, have all had contact with hospitals, and although they all work full time they manage to get round talking to people, to women hospital workers, mothers and patients to see what changes can be made. They had to break away, though, from the political organisations involved, because they were too centralised and bureaucratic. So they are trying to do local work only, if affiliated just to Women's Liberation. Altogether 12 women are involved. They want to find the sort of things women working in the hospitals would get active about. They are also working on an East London Alliance for hospital workers.

Needle is published from 27, Pearmen St. London E.1.

LASH, Sec. Mark Palmer, 122 Sinclair Rd. London W14 ONL. Hackney Women and Health Services (any local woman who has been victimised, mistreated or feels worried about medical care, can contact them as they want to gather more information)—Maggie, 7, Queensgate Villas, Victoria Park Rd. E.9. Marian and Christine, 96, Eleanor Rd. E.8.



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SPARE PARTS

PREPARING THE SURFACE

Unless you are going to hang something over it, or move out in two months, it is always best to get your walls clean, dry, and smooth before you start your transformation.

Old wallpaper is best stripped off, especially if it is very dirty, or is coming away from the wall.

1.. Soak the walls thoroughly with water and a wetting agent, until really saturated.



2.. Leave it for a few minutes, then start scraping it off with a stripping knife. If it isn't coming off easily, rewet it and try again.

3.. When it is all off, wash the wall with clean water to get rid of any sticky patches and fill any cracks with polyfilla. Leave that to dry, then sandpaper the whole wall smooth.

4.. If you are repapering the wall, first damp it to see if it is porous. If the water is absorbed then you need to apply size before the paper. If the wall is very patchy or bumpy it is best to hang some lining paper before your best stuff.

PEELING PAINT



If the emulsion paint is blistering and peeling in a few places, scrap it away with a stripping knife until the paint is firm. Then, sandpaper the patch and the edges of the emulsion, dust it off, and repaint it with feathery strokes blending it into the original paint.

PLASTER

Small holes and cracks can be easily remedied with Polyfilla.

1.. Brush away any loose plaster, and damp the hole.

2.. Press the Polyfilla firmly in, and leave it to dry out.

3.. Finish by sanding off any roughness.

If you have larger holes then you can fill them with a plug of paper soaked in plaster. Damp the hole, push the plug well in and level it off with plaster.

If you have a really bad hole, chip away any loose plaster and cut a piece of wire mesh (expanded metal) to fit the hole. If there is any wood at the back of the hole nail the mesh to that. Otherwise damp the old plaster, apply some dabs of new plaster to the edges and push the mesh into it. Leave it to harden a little, and start building up the plaster in thin layers. To strengthen the patch and to prevent hairline cracks appearing due to shrinkage, you can cover the area with lining paper.

WOODWORK

If your doors, window frames etc are in very bad shape i.e. layers of peeling paint and drips, & if you want a really good finish, then

WALLS

PAINTING..As long as you don't mix up the Emulsion & oil-based paints, use the correct undercoats & cover everything within splash range, you can't go far wrong. There are lots of new paints around to experiment with. Fluorescent, luminous, plastic paints, Satin and blackboard black for the kids to scrawl all over.

WALLPAPERING must be the most extensively covered 'do-it-yourself' activity ever written about. As long as you have a fairly logical mind & work systematically it is not difficult. Apart from the thousands of designs on the market, other papers can be used too... Wrapping paper, Brown paper (nice n'cheap & looks warm) Photo graphic background paper, or Melinex (flexible silver foil) but this acts a bit like a distorting mirror — difficult to live with...

First of all, clear those walls & get them clean and smooth.

you will have to use a blowlamp. Start with the mouldings, burn the paint a little way along, then strip it with a 'shave hook'. Work along flat surfaces with a stripping knife. Finish off with medium glass paper. NEVER USE EMULSION PAINT ON WOOD as you can't get it off with a blow-lamp as you can with an oil based paint. If the old paint isn't too bad then just sand down the bumps, drips and any blisters & wash it thoroughly as any grease will cause the new paint to peel off shortly afterwards.

DAMP

Before dealing with the inside effects, discover where the damp is coming from. Try blocked gutters, a cracked outer wall, missing tiles, rising damp or faulty plumbing. Some remedies are quite simple but be prepared to call in a professional if necessary. Once the source of the damp is cured the walls will still take a while to dry out. Paint the offending area with a water-proofing solution such as Aquaseal. Paint it well round your damp patch as otherwise the water will travel along the wall and seep out elsewhere.

stencils

If you fancy some wallpaper, but just can't find one you like, and...if you have unbounded determination and patience you can cut out stencils from stiff board with a sharp stanley knife.



You can buy plain coloured wallpaper as a background and spray on your patterns through the stencils. PRACTISE first on cheap lining paper until you are quite sure that you have got your design just right. Hold the stencils firmly against the wall and spray lightly or you will get drips. Children love it, and will happily

spend hours covering every available flat surface with your patterns.!



By the time you have got half way round the wall you might well be losing heart, so pick a small wall or alcove to start!

WALL COVERING

FABRIC

To hang fabric, such as HESSIAN, you must start with a clean, dry wall covered in lining paper, preferably the same colour as the fabric. Paste the glue (a PVA adhesive such as Bondfast, Evostick Resin W, or Unibond) onto the wall..NOT the fabric unless it is backed. Cut the material to size and hang it using a felt covered roller to smooth it out. Do not press too hard or the material will stretch, but allow it to overlap at top and bottom. After about 1hr, trim it off with a sharp knife.

HANGINGS

If you have a favourite piece of material a thin rug or tapestry that you don't want permanently glued to the wall, then you can either STAPLE it with a staple gun (This costs £4-£6) & doesn't always work on hard walls, but is OK on plaster board or walls with innumerable layers of old wallpaper.

Alternatively you can HANG it - this also means it is simple to remove for washing.



1..If you have a heavy piece of material or rug, drawing-pin it to a strip of wood (approx 1 x 1/2") and screw that to the wall. A thin strip of wood at the bottom will help it to hang flat.

2.. In the case of a thinner piece of fabric, turn over the top edge and seam along creating a slot for a piece of half round dowel rod, then screw this to the wall. You can also slot in a bamboo pole, brass rod, or whatever you have handy and support it with a couple of large cup hooks



3..Another method is to sew large curtain rings or loops onto your 'hanging' and slot those onto your rod.

TILES

Lino, cork, ceramic, anysort can be stuck on the wall. Most are sold with their own instructions and are not only practical—as in kitchen & bathroom, but they look good..in small quantities.. otherwise you end up feeling like you are in a mausoleum or a padded cell...

CORK can be obtained in sheets as well as tiles. It feels really warm & can be useful as a 'pin-up' board too; however it is not cheap. Attach it with a specialised floor adhesive such as Dunlop Floor, Evostick Floor, or Bostik II.

Of course there is nothing to stop you covering the wall in tacks and winding coloured wool all around, or growing plants up it / down it, or covering it in bottle tops, dried flowers ..or painting a very large picture...

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Stephanie Gilbert.

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